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TABLE OF CONTENTS

AN INTRODUCTION. THE CANON IN THE ROMANIAN LITERATURE.....	5
FAIRIES IN ROMANIAN FAIRY TALES	11
LITERATURE AND NATIONAL SPECIFICITY: LIVIU REBREANU	18
SACRED AND PROFANE IN TUDOR ARGHEZI'S POETRY.....	23
LUCIAN BLAGA – METHAPHYSICAL COORDINATES OF THE POETIC DISCOURSE.....	34
REPRESENTATIONS OF THE IMAGINARY IN THE ROMANIAN POETIC AVANT-GARDE	54
E. LOVINESCU AND THE ART OF PORTRAIT.....	63
GEORGE BACOVIA AND THE AVATARS OF DAMNATION	75
THE SPACE OF THE CITY BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY.	83
IDENTITY AND RUPTURE IN E. CIORAN'S WORK.....	87
N. STEINHARDT – THE WAY TO THE TRUTH.....	94
MIRCEA ELIADE – MEANINGS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSE	98
RADU STANCA. THE SPECTACULAR POETRY.....	104
THE BROKEN MIRROR. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING AND HISTORY IN POST-1989 ROMANIAN LITERATURE.....	113
TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN ȘTEFAN AUG. DOINAȘ'S POETRY	122
EUGEN SIMION AND THE VOCATION OF TOTALITY.....	134
NICHITA STĂNESCU – KNOWLEDGE AND POETIC MYTH IN <i>11 ELEGIES</i>	138
MARIN SORESCU – THE IRONIC SPECTACULAR	146
MINIMALIST POETRY TRANSITIVITY: MIRCEA IVĂNESCU	161
MIRCEA CĂRTĂRESCU. INSTANCES OF THE LYRIC IMAGINARY	170

AN INTRODUCTION. THE CANON IN THE ROMANIAN LITERATURE

Much has been said lately about the aesthetic and literary canon. The discussion itself is old, only the terminology related to it is different. It is well known that the Romanian literature went through many ages, many phases and avatars of its own conformation. Were we to consider that literature means, first of all, expression, form, a certain shaping of world vision of the writers, we may observe that any change in canon is synonymous with a substantial modification of the formal paradigm of an epoch, of its possibility to react to the stimulus of the real.

Consequently, the evolution of the Romanian literature is nothing but an evolution of the expressive modes, a renewal of the formal patterns used at a certain moment. Trying to simplify things, we may say that any literary epoch proposes us a certain stylistic paradigm, which is obviously folding on a particular horizon of expectation of the reader.

It is clear that there is always a sensitive gap between the expectations of the readers and the offer of the writers in a given historical period, so that the horizon of expectation of the public is always excelled by aesthetic projects more or less novel.

What is the canon? According to Mihaela Anghelescu in the preface to Harold Bloom's *Canonul occidental (The Western Canon)*, canon could be defined as "a list of authors considered fundamental in a certain literature." In other words, canon could be perceived as the climax of the literary hierarchy in a given historical epoch, but also as a certain expressive dominant determined by the context as well as by the intrinsic evolution of literature. The canon does not have an immutable conformation, a preset shape. On the contrary, it is subject to change, revision and perpetual metamorphosis.

Changing the canon means shocking the receivers' expectations, implying a spectacular alteration in content and form, a contradiction of the public's horizon of expectation. On the other hand, it is clear that a new canon is imposed by means of the more or less implicit complicity of the receivers of a certain epoch. Thus, there are literary epochs reticent to new, just as are epochs opened to change, to novel attempts. The canon can not be perceived as an abstract entity or as a notion depicted from the particular aesthetic reality and from a certain context. It is not a type of immutable pattern, like the Platonic ideas, with no connection to the real world, to the individual work, with the climate of the literary-artistic epoch. On the contrary, the aesthetic canon becomes alive in a particular socio-cultural frame, in an aesthetic environment that imprints its conformation, which determines it stringently.

The canon of a certain historical instance is situated on the border between tradition and innovation, trying to fuel the significant energies with the precedent aesthetic canon and with the attempt to overcome it. Undoubtedly, the change in canon is every time preceded by a crisis. In that moment in which literature does not offer viable aesthetic solutions, in that moment in which expression is no longer self-sufficient, it does not answer efficiently to its primordial destiny, a certain clash occurs, a crisis, on the world vision level and on the artistic form level. The change in canon may appear to be – and sometimes it really is – a way to adapt literature to the context, to a new sensitivity, to the flow and dynamics of life.

In his book *Literatura română postbelică (The Post-war Romanian Literature)*, Nicolae Manolescu regards the canon as "an overlapping of three elements: value (criticism share), success (market

share) and a heterogeneous mixture of social, moral, political and religious factors.” The same Manolescu proposes the following diachronic classification of the canon in the Romanian literature: the romantic-national canon (1840-1884), the classic-Victorian canon (1867-1917), the modernist canon (during the interwar period), the neo-modernist canon, in the ‘60s -’70s, and, eventually, the postmodernist canon.

In order to illustrate the dynamics and the metamorphosis of canon in the context of the Romanian literature, we will later on focus upon two canon types that, in spite of certain similarities, have a totally distinct profile: the modernist canon and the postmodernist one.

The modernist canon

Modernity is an aesthetic concept that sets, first of all, the correspondence between the work of art and the epoch in which it is created, a very close, yet very subtle bond, between the artistic creation and the social environment that generates it. The main feature is the authenticity, the concordance between feeling and literature, between the literary text and aesthetic emotion. Obviously, the unprecedented element stands in the novelty, which is the fundamental principle of modernism, although its connection to the tradition ought to be maintained, meaning that modernism is expressing itself in opposition to a stiff, dull and unenlightening tradition. Modernism is, thus, the form of certain radicalism in expression and in content, covering literary directions such as symbolism, expressionism, imagism etc.

In the Romanian literature, E. Lovinescu postulates the Modernism in his work: *Istoria literaturii române contemporane* (*The history of the Contemporary Romanian Literature*). The critic from the “Sburătorul” fundamentals his ideas starting from the temporal factor that “intervenes with an action whose strength increases throughout history.”

Critically considering the theory of Maiorescu regarding the “forms without gist” and embracing a sociological concept belonging to Gabriel Tarde, Lovinescu believes that the law of imitation activates in a cultural space, that the imitated forms sooner or later find a creative assimilation in a particular cultural-artistic context. This is the well-known theory of the synchronism. Yet, what does Lovinescu understand by synchronism? The critic considers that all the cultural manifestations of an epoch develop from the perspective of a “spirit of the century”, that they are modelled by a synchronous tendency that confers certain similar features to certain literary works, authors, themes or procedures from different cultural spaces. Lovinescu regards the synchronism as the “unifying action of the time upon the elaborations of the human spirit.”

In other words, synchronism expresses a unifying and integrative, centripetal and not centrifugal tendency, that kind of tendency that makes the general artistic, literary, cultural manifestations of a certain period be consonant: “Synchronism implies, as stated before, the unifying action of time upon social and cultural life of different peoples among themselves by means of a material and moral interdependence. In other word, there is that spirit of the century or, as Tacit used to call it, that *saeculum*, i.e. a sum of configurative conditions of the human life.” Lovinescu continues: “The spirit of the Medieval Age manifests itself under two forms: the religious belief that determines the entire activity of the soul (literature, philosophy, art etc.) and that generates the crusades on the political level, meaning the expansion of the Occident to the Orient, and on the other hand, on the social level, the specific form of feudalism, of German origin or not, in any case, a form of social individualism, just as the Gothic style is an expression of the mysticism.”

Nevertheless, Lovinescu operates a distinction between the “theoretic modernism” postulated and practiced by himself at the “Sburătorul” journal, under the form of “a

fundamental compliance towards all the phenomena of literary differentiation” and “an avant-garde and experimental modernism” of certain radical avant-garde journals as “Punct”, “Integral”, “Contimporanul”, “unu” etc.

The fundamental idea sustained by the synchronism of Lovinescu is that according to which, due to much evolved means of communication, the culture of a people is being developed by imitation and adaptation, in a strong interdependence towards the culture of other people. Partly opposing the theory of Maiorescu regarding the “forms without gist” Lovinescu also believes that in the development of a culture, the synchrony tendency with the spirit of the time is more important than the national spirit. The Romanian modernism is, one may say, the fruit of the synthesis between experience (tradition) and experiment (novelty). The modern canon is characterised by novelty, desire to synchronise to the Western sensitivity and literature, to the spirit of the time, to the synthesis as an argument of cohesion and aesthetic organic structure.

The postmodernist canon

The postmodernist canon stands, for a change, a contradictory character. On the one hand, postmodernism is entirely reluctant to any canon, to any intention of canonisation, of unity of the literary, voting for a relativist, multicultural and centrifugal perspective. On the other hand, certain recent values express the need of being included in the canon, thing noticed, among others, by Ion Simuț in an article in *Familia* (“Postmodernism predictably and naturally presses the present and recent values to be canonised.”)

One may state that beginning with the ‘80s there has been major changing in the Romanian literature, in the literary paradigm, with lots of consequences in writing. From the ingenuous writing, that used to see world in a very detached way and without any consciousness of ones own condition, it turned to the dialogued, plural writing, aiming both towards reflecting the real structures and the proper identity. In the literary texts of the writers of the 80’s and their followers, the word seems to have lost initial purity, it is endowed with a heavily significant transparency that confers the drama of not being able to utter the world without rest. There is an ironic and parody conscience in between the word and world, as well as a dilated view of cultural references, of livresque allusions.

The critic Ion Bogdan Lefter believes in finding many important postmodern features in the literature of the 80’s and 90’s: “In smaller or greater proportions, the page appears like a stylistic obliged eclectism, reversed from the free and <<decadent>> Alexandrine subtleties - to contribute to the expression of directness intended by the new sensitivity and thought. In the same time, there is that <<jubilation>> of escaping the constraints of modernism, a joy of <<relaxation>> of the creation, compatible to the smile, free humour and -lastly- to any procedure aiming to capture the reader (...). Symptoms of the post-modern attitude that appear in the Romanian literature of the 80’s and 90’s: the return of the author in the text, re-biographisation of the grammatical persons in a new existential engagement, more implication in the daily, here and now reality, avoiding the traps of confessional naivety by unveiling the textual mechanisms and thus, reaching a profounder pathetism.”

The Romanian Postmodernism is, therefore, ironic and parodic, quite fanciful and cynic, fairly subjective and unbiased. Reality is, according to Ioan Groșan, the only aspect regarded by the post-modern writers. The Romanian Postmodernism reconsiders the theme of authenticity, becoming a mobile and active mirror of reality.

On the other hand, there are times when the post-modern writers regard the same works of art, works characterised by diversity and mobility, they explore different discourse types, they

casually de-mystify and parodically live their own biographies, exalting the text as a way of living, as a means to live through literature.

Making use of a rather oxymoron, one might say that ostentation is the natural feature of the post-modern writer, but an ostentation tempered by irony and prolonged in the intertextual space. The normality and elaboration, the quotidian and the transcendent elevation, the hidden gravity and unreliability, appeal to tradition and temptation of experiment, the playful instinct and unconcessive expression towards any type of common works – all these are differently proportioned ingredients of the Romanian Postmodernism.

According to Ștefan Borbely, the post-modern writers see normality as an adventure, they take the inheritance of modernity and offer a new dimension to reality and literature. There is only an approximate evaluation regarding the novelty of this vision, regarding its chances of aesthetic success. Nevertheless, it is a different level than that of the modern vision; it is, as they say, a change in paradigm. The myths of the post-modern writers, in fact anti-myths, are truly undertaken by them, not only in the livresque aspect, but also in the aspect of spontaneous living.

The experiment, as form of life, is the fundamental option of the post-modern writers. There is no fatal separation between life and text. The text is being lived with clear ardour, while life is turned into fiction, re-written by the post-modern consciousness, a consciousness of an extremely available lucidity, but in the same time, relative lucidity due to irony and parodic impulse.

We notice that the last two decades show how there are enough writers who deliberately place their works under the post-modern sign, while there are others who more or less theoretise the postmodernism; or, there are those writers who do not explicitly assume the concept but may be placed in this literary paradigm. There is a clarifying and easy to follow path, that starts from the literature of the 80's and reaches the 90's. There are also, filiations, correspondences, analogies harmonies or disharmonies between the two periods of the contemporary literature, since we believe that there are no such things as gaps but communication paths between ages, much more subtle and stale than one might consider.

We ask ourselves how efficient and methodologically pertinent is the concept of literary generation today, in an age of fractures and flagrant deconstruction of cultural paradigms. We believe that today, more than ever, the concept of literary generation stands a whole relative meaning, a signification that cannot be made absolute, in spite of the fact that there are writers who embrace the same ideatic sense, the same programmatic norms, the same manner of understanding world and literature.

The concept of generation, regardless the precautions we choose to consider, is applied to a *de facto* reality in the case of the literature of the 80's, which derives from an undoubted communion of aesthetic ideals and ethic exigency of certain writers, who, besides an honourable feeling of intellectual solidarity, have kept their unique expressive profile. As for the generation of the 90's, it is less homogenous, it is somehow dis-centered, meaning that there are more polarity centres (Bucharest, Iași, Cluj, Timișoara etc.), centres that, in spite of self-sufficient velleity, have varied visions upon the concept of generation, let alone upon the programmes, criteria and artistic norms proposed/imposed by the creative act.

On the other hand, there are obvious distinctions between the writers of the 80's and those of the 90's, both regarding the aesthetic options and the writing style. In the same time, one has to admit that the literary strategies are also different because of the circumstances in which the two generations wrote/write: i. e. if the writers of the 80's wrote in an epoch governed by

dogmatism and totalitarianism, forced to make use of hidden, allusive, subversive writing techniques, in order to survive spiritually and also to become the model of an exemplary solidarity, the writers of the 90's performed after 1989 (even if they wrote before that date), under a total freedom of expression, freedom which is also felt in the aesthetic modalities, the writing strategies and possibility of assuming the reality and individual condition.

In his volume of poetry, *Despre poezie (On poetry)*, Nicolae Manolescu underlines the distinctive and common features of the Modernism and Postmodernism: "The modern poetry is the first one to reject the past entirely. There is an exact opposite phenomenon going on in postmodernism: it is not just that it does not turn its back to the modern poetry whom it somehow revives, but it does not turn its back to the older poetry. It is as if postmodernism would redefine itself in a desire to comprise the past and would refer to the entire poetry written before (...). The modern poet is usually <<innocent>> regarding tradition: it gets rid of it as if it were a useless burden. He wants to make something different than his predecessors. His feeling of freedom is pushed to anarchism. To him, tradition is a burden gracefully carried, critically and ironically assumed."

In short one might say that the Romanian Postmodernism implies a growth in the self consciousness of the Romanian literature, its way under the sign of complete lucidity.

The debate about the canon and its mutations in the Romanian literature is surely much more ample than we tried to imply here. We did nothing but state the facts, eliminate certain perspectives regarding this concept, and set a certain horizon of understanding. It is an open discussion, after all.

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FAIRIES IN ROMANIAN FAIRY TALES

The shaping of a coherent and unitary Romanian mythology was impeded by the process of conversion to Christianity, which took place at the same time with the formation of the Romanian people proper. Apart from that, the cohesion as a system of the Romanian mythology could not become unitary due to some foreign influences: on one hand the influence of some Asian beliefs and myths (during the great migrations); on the other hand, the influence of the restrictive religious dogmas of Christianity.

Nevertheless, remnants of original Romanian mythology can be traced in a series of folk ceremonies of a mysterious character, for example the type of the old-womanish feasts in ballads, fairy tales or magic charms rituals, as the death watch in the north west of the country.

On the other hand, the Romanian mythology does not overlap a mythical geography ethnically or totemically marked. Lucian Blaga, a modern Romanian poet, places the space of the Romanian mythology in what he calls the "mioritical" ("mioara" is the name given to a young ewe, an important character in the Romanian ballads). It is formed of the alternation valley/hill which greatly expresses the sensitivity and mentality specific to the Romanian people. This sensitivity materialized, as far as the affective level is concerned, in the feeling of longing - "dor" - and, at the level of the folk creation, in the structure and function of the elegiac song, typically Romanian lyrical poetry and music - "doina".

Romulus Vulcanescu considered the round dance phenomenon as defining for the Romanian mythology, this being considered the emblem and matrix of the mythical spirit of the Romanian people. As a matter of fact the specific space of the Romanian mythology has a dual configuration, being divided into this realm (the daily world, the immediate reality) and the other realm (the fabulous, informal and upside down world).

The characteristic space of the Romanian mythology is peopled with divinities of an extremely diversified typology. Thus we can distinguish syncretic divinities (Fatal Sisters, Holy Friday, Holy Sunday, The Holy Virgin, etc.); demigods (The Flying Goblin, The Christmas, The Morning Star); archetypal forefathers (The Old Men, The Giants); good fairies, evil fairies, good fabulous characters, demons (The Dog of the Earth, The Forest's Mother, The Ghosts, etc.). Also belonging to the mythical elements are the living water, the dead water, different objects, plants and magic tools (fire wheels, the belladonna, the dog's bane, etc.). The objects vary more or less from one version to another. Nevertheless they are all possessed of the same magic virtues which enable the hero to fulfill his task and come face to face with his beloved fairy (a leather cap which conceals our hero from the eyes of all people, a rod of brass which helps him obtain command over seven tribes of Jins, a pair of sandals with which he walks on water, a whip which, when is cracked in front of his enemies, turns them all into stones).

Some aspects of magic choreography, for instance the hobby-horse dance, some holidays, magical rituals and ceremonies as well as a mythical geography (The Other Realm, Saturday's Spring-water, The Valley of Decay, The Valley of the Fairies, etc.) complete the Romanian mythological 'pantheon', giving it a particular shape, a specific appearance. These divinities are not altogether Romanian, with an autonomous structure and finality. More likely, they lost their initial purity, suffering multiple influences. The Dacian-Getic ancient mythology represents the

substratum of the Romanian mythology and it underwent numerous changes and mutations until the 16th century.

The Romanian mythology has some specific features that model its physiognomy, gaining thus a particular status. Firstly, according to its philosophy, the world is peopled with evil spirits, mischievous demons that, nonetheless, can be defeated by human cleverness. Secondly, the concept of fate is very well defined; fate is implacable, its functioning cannot be determined or influenced by human will. Even the human being becomes a trivial toy in the hands of destiny. Thus, in a fairy tale, when Prince Charming finds himself lost at a crossroads and asks an old woman (Holy Friday) which way to go, he gets the following answer: "If you go to the right, you will repent, if you go to the left, you will repent as well."

Thirdly, another particular feature of the Romanian mythology is the belief in a parallel world, The Other Realm, where a charming, eternal, heathen life is going on. Usually, this second realm is watched over or lived in by dragons and has the characteristics of hell. At the same time the feats of the mythical heroes inhabiting the Romanian fairy tales have a purely ideal character, not looking for material gains. The lack of pragmatism is an essential feature of the Romanian mythology: every sacrifice of the mythical hero does not aim at an immediate reward but the shaping and strengthening of his own exemplary destiny.

Then comes another essential element: time. The distinction between absolute (cosmic) time and human time (terrestrial) is transparent in an obvious way. One of the most beautiful and interesting Romanian fairy tale, *Youth Without Age and Life Without Death*, imagines the existence of a timeless space, where time can be annihilated and where the virtuous hero gets to, after some initiating trials. But he has to leave it because of his irrepressible longing - "dor" - for his parents. As soon as he gets out of it he becomes old very quickly and, after realizing how much time has passed, he dies. This fairy tale shapes the very specificity of the human condition, marked by time and undergoing change and ephemeral life. Man, this tale seems to tell us, must assume his own condition, take advantage of it, being unable to overpass it. The ethical substratum of many Romanian fairy tales is thus essential because, from the adventures and feats of the mythical hero, a moral lesson is taught, everything being divided into good and evil, truth and lies, malignant and beneficial.

We can say that the Romanian mythology has, in its fundamental limits, an obviously pastoral structure; its cosmogony is pastoral and its typical divinities bear the pattern of a pastoral mentality. The fact that there are no mythical gods or characters to protect the fields, the cities or crafts show, beyond doubt, that the Romanian mythology stopped, in its evolution, at the archaic stage of grazing cattle and sheep and this gives it a particular and unmistakable appearance.

Our fairy-tales usually have a king and a queen as main characters or a prince and princess. The king bears names got from the colour spectre: The White King, The Red King, seldom The Green King or The Yellow King. There is not a Black King, his negative role being taken by The Red King. Sometimes we have other characters: the son of a great boyar, an old man and an old woman, a hermit, etc. But all of them will eventually reach the top of the society.

Parents usually have three sons or three daughters. The youngest of them always succeed in their enterprises. And nowhere else is the saying "Appearances are deceptive" more real than in our fairy-tales: an ugly outfit and dumb looks hide the most noble and heroic soul. And this applies both to animals, things and people.

Among the enemies of the heroes we can count the dragons, the ogres, anthropophagous giants or dwarfs, bad fairies who abduct people. The devil is not so important and is often taken

in through its own imbecility. Death is also mocked at and God is a kind old man lacking his religious halo.

Vampires and were-wolves do not exist in the Romanian mythology. In Roman Jacobson's opinion there is a common Slavic inheritance and tradition in ghosts. The Fatal Sisters, who influence the destiny of a child are also found in the Slovenian and Germanic traditions. What we find in Illinois and Mississippi about witchcraft is almost identical with what is found in Romanian and Slavic stories: witches shaped as hogs or rabbits; they steal the milk of the cows, leaving them weak and sick. (Senn 1982: 63-77)

There are two distinct worlds: the world beyond, under the ground, The Black Realm which differs very much from our real world, and The White World. The atmosphere is peopled by personified physical phenomena: The Wind, The White Frost, The Frost, The Sun and The Moon.

On his way to accomplish the tasks, Prince Charming meets a variety of animals (fish, raven, frog, bee, etc.) which he helps and then is helped by them. He is also helped by supernatural companions such as The Wood-bender, The Stone-breaker, The Frosty Man, The Hungry Man, The Thirsty Man. The blackamoor, of Oriental origin, is a peculiar character in our fairy-tales. He appears when a ring is touched and carries out his master's orders. The main characters are also helped by a series of tokens: peasant's sandals to cross the water, the hat to become invisible, the belt with which you can do everything. The feats are infinite and they are meant to emphasize Prince Charming's manliness, which is shared with his helpers.

The real notions of time and space are not known in the fairy-tales. A year becomes a day, an hour three centuries, a minute half an eternity (in the fairy-tale "The Mother Built up Alive").

Numbers are also important as in other mythologies and mystical faiths. Number three has a sacred value. In our fairy-tales the king has almost always three sons or daughters and the hero's feats are three in number. He has three companions and he meets three devils who quarrel for three magical things. He visits three saints (usually Holy Wednesday, Holy Friday, Holy Sunday) who give him three tokens to get rid of the pursuer. Other numbers found in our folklore are nine as in the fairy-tale "The Layman Dawn" where a girl watches over a prince for nine years, nine months, nine weeks and nine days; twelve and seven (Peter the Brave slaughters seven ogres).

One of the most used phenomena to animate the hero is *the living water* splashed after *the dead water* has gathered the chopped body. The *strong water* gives the hero power. Sometimes the animation part is played by *the blood* or by *the need of life*.

In the Romanian mythology the fairies are shaped as women and placed under the two ethical categories, the good and the evil. The good fairies, more numerous, are beautiful virgins, very young and endowed with magic powers. They are always in favour of the honest hero, and have solutions at hand for the perils in which the perfect male character is (usually Prince Charming-Făt Frumos). But it happens that sometimes they punish the person who breaks a ritual (for example the forbidden entrance onto their territories). The usual punishment is blindness.

The folklorist Simion Florea Marian in his *Basme populare romanesti* tells his readers that the Beautiful Ladies or the Little Beauties are music lovers, shrewd, and lure with their charms the casual travellers. People believe that they are invisible womanish creatures who live among the cliffs of the mountains and near the springs of the forests. They say that the Little Beauties wander singing divinely around the place where they live. If they come across a sleeping man they

take him with them without delay. After they have offered him victuals and he has accepted to eat and drink he becomes their property and his manly possessions are taken advantage of. (Florea Marian: 12-81)

They are creatures of the collective fantasy and are characterized by shrewdness, quick thinking, interested politeness, power of judgement, physical beauty. The myth of the Beauties is a native one and through their use in some legends, fairy tales and anecdotal short stories for children they begin to lose the mythical aura. Behaving like girls who want to get married they pass imperceptibly from the magic world of fiction into that of daily reality.

Marcu Beza in his *Paganism in Romanian Folklore* calls them nymphs and says that “though in many points very similar to the Celtic fairies, they differ from them in being always represented, not in diminutive form, but in full stature.”(Beza 1928: 70) But they can have the shape of an animal when first encountering their lover: hind, tortoise, owl, white bird.

Common to the Balkan area and not only is the wedding of a fairy with a handsome shepherd who plays on the flute. Usually he gets the fairy by stealing her garment (raiment, veil, kerchief, scarf) and when she gets it back, through different means, she vanishes. In fact her powers are in her clothes and without them she is at the mercy of any mortal.

There are two incidents that occur very often. They are told either separately or together in a story.

“First, the incident of the golden apples. In the garden of an emperor there is an wondrous apple tree that bears fruit entirely of gold, but no sooner do they ripen than in the middle of the night they disappear. The emperor is grieved at heart to the point of giving up his throne to solve the mystery. Two of his sons watch in turn, but with no avail; the youngest son succeeds at last in catching sight of the seven nymphs, who come in the guise of seven birds and steal the golden apples. The incident is given much space in a popular Romanian book, *The Story of the Most Handsome Arghir and Ilena*. In English it is used in a somewhat changed form - instead of the stolen apples the grass being strangely trodden down by William Morris in *The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon* .

Then there is the incident of the forbidden chamber. An emperor, before leaving, gives his son a bunch of keys and tells him: ‘Thou hast my permission to open all the chambers of the palace, except the one which unlocks with the golden key.’ When the son is left alone he cannot refrain from entering that particular chamber, where he gets a glimpse of the enchanting fairy realm.”(Beza 1928: 77)

The folk believe that fairies are born from flowers, their names being a good example (The Fairy of the Flowers, The Fairy of the Woods etc.). The fairies have a queen named The Fairy of the Fairies or The Queen of the Fairies. She is forever young, due to her virginity. She will grow old only after marrying a mortal when she loses her magical powers as well. The Fairy of the Fairies lives in the fairyland, where nobody is born and nobody dies, an unalterable and timeless space. The few mortals that reach this realm cannot go back to the real world. They are changed into rocks or animals.

The folklorist Lazar Saineanu noticed that the fairies play a major role in the Romanian mythology. They are always young, dressed in white and of a ravishing beauty. At the same time they belong to different types and bear different names according to their way of living: in trees or under water, in the mountains or in the fields. He classifies the fairies in several groups, for

example the tree-lassie, in the tale *The Girl from the Laurel Tree*, the bird-lassie in the tale *The Little Blackamoor* or *Arapusca*, the fish-lassie in *The Fairy of the Fairies*, Ileana Cosanzeana in *The Fairy of the World*. (Saineanu 1978)

The Romanian scholar and ruler Dimitrie Cantemir mentions the group of the good fairies in Chapter 3 of his *Descriptio Moldaviae*. He says the ‘fairy’ is a word which you could suppose to come from the name of Diana. However it is rarely used in the singular; most of the times they use the plural, fairies, and they say they are beautiful girls casting their charms on the others. (Cantemir 1974: 115)

The good fairies have a favourable influence on people: they help them, sometimes guide them, open the gates to the magical space beyond. The bad fairies are more often old, ugly, skinny; but they can also be luring, young and extremely beautiful, a cover up for wicked intentions. There is only one type of bad fairies, located in the Apuseni Mountains, Mamornita (The Black Beetle). This wicked type of fairies does not exist in the archaic level of the Romanian mythology, and the contamination was realized through “they fairies” -“iele”.

“They fairies” are feminine creatures with magical powers. They are often met in superstitions and do not have a clearly shaped character and a definite mythological status. One of the explanations can be given by the abundance of folk variants where they are found. They are mostly represented by maidens with unchained instincts, great tentative capacity, having the attributes of nymphs, naiads, dryads and mermaids. They live in the air, in the woods or caves, in the mountains or on the banks of the rivers. Often enough they bathe in pure springs and during the night, in the moonlight, they dance in a circle (the counterpart of the English rings), in secluded places, naked or only with their breasts uncovered, with their hair let down. The spot where they danced is left scorched, as if burnt by the fire. The grass never grows there again and the boughs of the trees are leafless.

“They fairies” are sometimes visible, showing seductive bodies. In other circumstances they have the inconsistency of ghosts with an illusion of merry women. The folk imagination represents them as young, voluptuous, boisterous maidens, sometimes revengeful and mean, without being fundamentally malignant. Usually they are not considered as being wicked fairies. They take revenge only when provoked, offended or looked at while dancing. Then they punish the culprit by laming him after they have made him fall asleep with their singing and have danced three times around him. A magic charm, collected from the Romanian folklore by the poet V. Alecsandri, gives us a suggestive portrait of the fairies:

“You fairies,
You marvels of nature,
Foes of the mortals,
Masters of the wind,
Ladies of the earth,
Flying through the air,
Gliding on the grass,
Treading on the waves,
Go a long way off,
To the pond, the reeds and the desert,
Where priests ring no bell,
Where maidens dance not,

Go with the mighty wind,
To the end of the world.”

B. P. Hasdeu in *Etymologicum Magnum Romaniae* quotes a tradition from the county of Prahova, according to which the fairies often drink water from the wells at nighttime and whoever drinks after them gets disfigured.

The fairies are not lonely, they gather in gangs, being able to go from one place to another at a miraculous speed. Their name is shrouded in mystery, inaccessible. “They” is not a name but the third person plural of the Romanian pronoun they; it is spelled “ele” but pronounced “iele”. From this pronunciation the name of the fairies derived: “Iele” - an approximate translation in English being “They fairies”. Their real name is replaced, as V. Kernbach shows in *The Dictionary of General Mythology*, by attributive symbols classified in two groups: a) impartial similes - Them, They, Sweet Woodruffs, Whirls, Mires, Herodesses, Whitsuns, Pests, Tempests; b) flattering similes - Damsels, Marvels, Beauties, Pixies, Night Saints, Handsomes, Queens of the Air, etc.

There are some holidays dedicated to these fairies: Whitsun, the Marine Day, the Nine Thursdays after Easter, holidays that must be respected through discretion and rest. The fairies punish the breaking of these norms in different ways: those who work during the holidays are lifted in whirlwinds, tormented and driven mad. In other cases men and animals die mysteriously or hail comes upon them, the house is set on fire, huge floods occur.

Those who succeed in learning the fairies’ singing are abducted and disappear without any trace. People who insult fairies, sleep under their trees drink water from their springs or refuse their invitation to dance with them are subject to severe punishment. Even those who unwillingly hear their songs become dumb.

Remedies against the wicked actions of the fairies are various. They are either preventive, like the wormwood or garlic borne at the waist or hat, medical or through exorcism. Such is the Romanian folk dance “Calusarii”- the hobby horse dance, performed on a sick body. Another taming means is to thrust a horse skull in the gatepost. From the viewpoint of their characteristics - dancing, instinctual frenzy - the fairies seem to inherit the bacchantes (maenads) from the Greek mythology, sharing in common features also owned by other supernatural creatures from the European heritage.

In the past the printing of folk literature was achieved due to the romantic passion of several rural generations of educated people. They published modest collections of fairy tales in small number of copies. Those who could get a printing establishment of their own were luckier. Famous scholars understood the need of publishing the Romanian folk lore and pleaded for it at the highest forum. Eventually, the Romanian Academy began printing books about ethnology and folklore and until 1974 they published 85 titles (Datcu 1974)

The first collectors of Romanian fairy-tales were the Schott brothers who published a collection of stories in 1845 entitled *Romanian Fairy-tales*. The book has a foreword which explains the mythology of the fairy-tales being strongly influenced by the Grimm theory. Petre Ispirescu’s collection is the richest and most accurate one and comprises 37 stories, published in 1882. There followed many others who preserved, more or less, the genuine stories of the folk people.

What all fairy-tales share in common is imagination which gives birth to fantastic circumstances, characters and solutions to our problems. People have always needed an escape from this trivial and dull world. They did it in the past inventing fairy-tales and myths, they do it today inventing new ones. But with the help of scientific devices they have the possibility of

telling them on audio or video tapes. Skillful scriptwriters and film directors invent stories on the screen. We still have fairy-tales for our children but for the grown-ups they are called either science fiction books or films. They teem with alien creatures and ufo's that still abduct people like the old fairies and throw them into the world afterwards with stories that few people believe in or have never been proved as real.

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LITERATURE AND NATIONAL SPECIFICITY: LIVIU REBREANU

Liviu Rebreanu was, as it is known, a creator with an extraordinary capacity of reflecting reality. His work shows, before all else, the writer's will to record reality without lyrical excesses, without useless and conventional mythization, in an acute effort to objectify vision and to represent life authentically, in its most intimate developments. Hence the vitality of Rebreanu's work, its indisputable perennial character, its aesthetic and documentary value. *Ion (John)*, *Răscoală (The Uprising)*, *Pădurea spânzuraților (The Forest of the Hanged)* – are works where the impression of life is overwhelming; there are dozens of bustling characters, most varied epic situations cross one another, the tumult of existence seems to overflow each page; all this builds a fictional universe that is governed by its own laws and has its own geography, but also displays a strong referential character.

In order to understand Rebreanu's work adequately, we must take into consideration its historical context and, in particular, the way in which the writer reacted to certain aesthetic conceptions and problems of the time. In the period of time when Rebreanu was educated, the dispute between the proponents of engaged art and those favoring art for art's sake was barely finished. On the one hand, the author of *Ion (John)* acknowledges his defense of aesthetic autonomy, in line with Lovinescu and, simultaneously, rejects engagement in art, pointing out that "an engaged work cannot be but a propaganda manual for certain purposes, which has nothing to do with art." Obviously, such a statement does not exclude in any way the importance and social role of art, the echoes the work of art sends towards the society that has produced it ("Of course, I cannot help believing in a social and even ethical effect of *Răscoală*. I would even be dissatisfied if it didn't occur. Because it defines a work of art. A work of art without social and moral echoes does not exist.") *Literature and love* is a conference with programmatic character, illustrative of the artistic belief of the writer and where Rebreanu also refers to several aspects of the poetics of realism. He considers that literature does not only mean a mimetic and passive reflection of reality but rather a selection and an interpretation of the data of reality from the perspective of creative personality. "Literature, says Liviu Rebreanu, irrespective of its form, means not only depiction but also interpretation and, therefore, in a sense, a more or less open criticism of the world and society in which the writer lives."

On the other hand, at the same conference, he supports the idea of the ethical and ethnic component of literature which is sanctioned by the intrinsic aesthetic value of the work. Among the ethical values that literature incorporates, national and social specificity and the moral laws of tradition are considered as defining of the moral conformation of a writer, of his unique artistic profile: "Actually, all great literary works, all works ennobling the civilization of a nation are also great ethical achievements, syntheses of a Weltanschauung, evidence of the way a people thinks and feels at a particular moment. National specificity, a postulate of the differentiation yearned for by each nation of a world in full turmoil and emulation, is the creation of literature, in particular, and arts, in general. Literature is the magic filter that retains the essence of the qualities and flaws of a people and keeps it alive, and it connects a certain nation and a certain land." Rebreanu's penchant for objective story-telling is confessed, explained and accounted for in the numerous documents in which he presents his *ars poetica*. He considers that the pulsation of

life, the overwhelming rhythm of reality cannot be captured unless the writer suppresses his own subjectivity, unwilling to intervene in the flow of events, thus assuming a neutral, though not passive, absolutely contemplative stance (“I have always refrained from writing works in the first person. This hyperbolization of the self, anachronistic remainder from the Romantics who, at the time, could afford to see themselves as the center of the world, seems to me a little ridiculous. Modesty does not mean disinterestedness; on the contrary, it is an attitude. Without my direct involvement, the work will be able to grow and live more independently.”) On the other hand, literary creation is perceived as a synthesis that weaves together characters of an overflowing diversity, unconnected situations and events, human types that bear the mark of the social climate generating them; it is a synthesis of mimetic reception and transfiguration, of lucidity and pathos of rendering life in its ultimate truth. “Literary creation can only be a synthesis,” Liviu Rebreanu writes somewhere: “The man I paint may have and should have resemblance to thousands of people, as all people have in life, but he only lives by what he has got unique and different from all the people of all times. Unique is only the soul. Life eternalized by soul’s movements – realism.”

Symptomatic for Rebreanu’s aesthetic conception is his rejection of belles-lettres, his preference for a literary language of an extreme sobriety, at a time when Romanian literature was still under the influence of the cult of the “beautiful phrase.” Due to its artificial, studied expressivity, the latter is, according to the writer, deforming, lacking the capacity of rendering the world in its authentic colors and in the multitude of aspects it presents itself to the eye. For these reasons, writing is, to the author, a profession of maximum responsibility, excluding pun and being assumed fervently, from an ethical angle, as an intrinsic morality of the person transferring real world into a fictional universe built out of words (“To me art – I am saying art and I am thinking about literature – means creation of people and life. Thus, art, just like divine creation, becomes the most wonderful mystery. By creating living people, endowed with a life of their own, the writer gets close to the mystery of eternity. Not beauty, a human invention, is interesting in art but the pulsation of life. When you have managed to contain within words a few moments of real life you have achieved a work more precious than all the beautiful phrases in the world” – *Cred/ I Believe*, 1924).

The literature of Liviu Rebreanu has been rightly regarded by Mircea Muthu as being under the sign of the organic. Organicity is the major feature of this work riddled by concrete details but nonetheless eager to deal with the ultimate essences of existence. *In Praise of the Romanian Peasant*, his acceptance speech at the Romanian Academy, is very relevant in this respect as it reveals Rebreanu’s conception of totality, of the organic, a concept whose significance had lost ground and efficiency by the period when the author was at the peak of his creative activity because “totality had already been questioned, this fact being demonstrated by the perceptible movement from epic aspirations and objectification in the realist tradition visible in his first novel, to later development focused on radiographing matters of conscience” (Mircea Muthu).

In *In Praise of the Romanian Peasant*, Rebreanu begins by justifying his gesture of eulogizing the many and the anonymous, in words that show modesty, good-faith and a sense of responsibility for those who represent the foundation of the Romanian people. The writer’s gesture starts from a feeling expressed not in a declarative-rhetorical manner but with a certain modesty and timidity, with a sense of duty for the humble: “I feel quite embarrassed to come in front of you to praise precisely the most humble Romanian, and I realize that this move is not very clever. When you talk about a great man or about the representative of a powerful class, you

have the certainty that no matter what you say, it will not be too much or your praise too exaggerated. The one I dare to come up with is poor and weak. So he has always been and so he will probably be forever. His work and suffering feed and enrich his oppressors. He is meant to be eternally naked. Nonetheless, this praise is meant neither to raise nor to bring down, not even to prove something; it is only meant to confess a faith and my continuing solidarity with the heart of the many, for whom too often insult and slander have been in store and too rarely good words... ”.

Rebreanu underlines the importance of peasantry in the history of the Romanian nation compared to its role in other nations but also compared to urban civilization and mentality. Eventually, the peasant is a primordial entity that represents the matrix of the Romanian soul in its most essential and inalterable defining features (“In the life of other nations, the peasantry could have and did have, a secondary, dull role; to us, however, it is the very spring of pure and eternal Romanianism. With us, the only permanent, inalterable reality has been and remains the peasant. So much so that, in fact, the Romanian peasant is not even a peasant like the ones in other nations. The very word for him has an urban origin, at least in its present meaning. The peasant never calls himself a peasant. Only of late and under political influence did the word “peasant” enter the countryside to differentiate the inhabitant of the village from the one in the town. Peasants call peasants simply “people.” Actually, the peasant has no name, it is not a class, craft or function, it is the people itself – the Romanian man. For everyone, peasant is synonymous to Romanian...”).

Through his archetypal structure, his archaic mentality and the vigor that has always characterized him, the Romanian peasant can – in Liviu Rebreanu’s vision – explain the enigma of Romanian ethnogenesis. This is so because the peasant has had “organic connections” with the land on which he was born, because he knew how to safeguard unaltered his being and identity in the midst of all historical calamities that threatened him. For these reasons, the peasant is, in the writer’s opinion, “the actual keeper of the national territory.” The love of land is, therefore, the most important feature of the Romanian peasant, it is the feeling that ennobles his existence by giving it stability and robustness. The land is, to the Romanian peasant, a reason of life and a seal of destiny impressed upon him from the very dawn of life, a symbol of his ethnic identity, as the writer points out: “To our peasant, land is not an object of exploitation but a living being, for whom he feels a strange feeling of adoration and fear. He feels produced and born of this land like a magic plant that cannot ever be uprooted. That is why the land is his very reason to exist. Our land has a voice that the peasant hears and understands. It is “«the holy inspiring land», that has modeled our body and soul and through which the sun, and the waters, and the mountains and its hills have bestowed on us all the qualities and flaws with which we present ourselves in the world today. This land seems to be able to produce only Romanians.”

Starting from the premise that “the life of tranquil peoples happens mostly in the basement of history,” Rebreanu considers that “the Romanian nation has been the most tranquil in the world,” for it had no conquest wars, and it was not driven by thoughts of expansion. On the other hand, an essential feature of a nation, besides blood kinship, is language. Romanian language is, according to the author, the creation of the Romanian peasant, it is a “peasant language,” with its specific robustness but also with its expressivity that derives from folk modulations of its linguistic patterns. “The charm and expressivity,” the speech goes, “it received from its original creator, the peasant. All its development, until very recently, is due to the peasant, the only one who has always spoken it. Too cultivated languages, having reached full

maturity, become rigid, abstracting, mechanical. Losing or despising direct contact with the people, they eventually grow old, artificial, they become dead organisms – Latin, Greek, Hebrew... Our language, cultivated only by peasants, in continuous connection with the land and the concrete world, has preserved the magic and naïve expression of the simple man, a picturesque and colored freshness, the rhythm of moving life. This language, with all its peasant works, is conservative and it stubbornly defends its conformation, remaining refractory to attempts to alter it.”

Besides language, a fundamental landmark of the structure of the Romanian peasant is *faith*, where the peasant found moral support and an existential model. Faith in God modeled the mental, emotional and cognitive structure of the peasant, shaping conduct norms and rules of life that guided him throughout his existence: “This religion, this Romanian law is unique for our entire nation and is above all theological controversies. It encapsulates the Weltanschauung of the Romanian peasant, his resignation and trust in divine justice. The Romanian law is the moral support of the peasant. It gave him the strength to endure and overcome trials throughout centuries. Our Christian faith, as practiced and lived by the peasant, contains in itself all phases and adventures of the history of Romanian people, just like the Romanian language...”

In Liviu Rebreanu’s vision, writers must constantly return to the ethical and expressive source of ethnic vitality and energy represented by the Romanian peasant. Only in close connection with the peasantry will creators “produce universally valuable works and serve, at the same time, national destiny...”

The conclusion of the acceptance speech is fully enlightening for the aesthetic, social and moral conception of Liviu Rebreanu: “We are and we will always be a nation of peasants. Therefore, our destiny as people, state and cultural power depends on the amount of pure gold that lies in the soul of the peasant. But it also depends on how this gold is going to be used and turned into eternal values.”

In Praise of the Romanian Peasant crystallizes the belief of the great writer in synthetic appreciation, of sharp clarity and high expressivity. Beyond programmatic aspects, we find here Rebreanu’s eternal need of defining himself, of self-analyzing in the light of the authenticity and the truth of life and creation: “Selected to join a recently established institution and willing to observe the academic usage of praising a predecessor, I feel bound to come up with someone from the outside, with my ancestor and the ancestor of some of you, in a larger sense, with the ancestor of us all: the Romanian peasant... I feel quite embarrassed to come in front of you to praise precisely the most humble Romanian, and I realize that this move is not very clever. When you talk about a great man or about the representative of a powerful class, you have the certainty that no matter what you say, it will not be too much or your praise too exaggerated. The one I dare to come up with is poor and weak. So he has always been and so he will probably be forever. His work and suffering feed and enrich his oppressors. He is meant to be eternally naked. Nonetheless, this praise is meant neither to raise nor to bring down, not even to prove something; it is only meant to confess a faith and my continuing solidarity with the heart of the many, for whom too often insult and slander have been in store and too rarely good words (...). Therefore, today and for a long time to come, we must constantly return to the Romanian peasant. Because, just as Antaeus gained new strength when touching the earth, Romanian creators alike, by preserving spiritual contact with the Romanian peasant will produce valuable universal works and will serve, at the same time, the destiny of the nation... And, in its turn, the new land that was created mostly through the peasant’s sacrifice must give the latter the better

life that he deserves. Not through beautiful words or documents but through a better education that should provide fruitful work and a decent life. And last but not least, by giving him what he yearns for in vain for centuries: light and justice.”

Rebreanu expresses, in his reception speech, his attachment to a class that, throughout time, had been disadvantaged, despised and more often than not ignored or mocked. The writer valorizes, in simple words, in suggestive images that combine plasticity and robust evocation, the qualities of the Romanian peasant, those enduring, inalterable virtues that allowed him to survive in a geographical area situated at the crossroads of history’s winds and storms. Rebreanu’s praise begins in a tone of certain humility and in a somewhat “minor” tone, by invoking the reasons determining the writer to speak about a social class whose virtues had often been overlooked. The peasant is the one who, in the writer’s vision, lies at the basis of Romanian state. In his robust sensitivity, in his strict observance of tradition and in the expressivity of his language, one can find the specific features of the Romanian peasant, those individual and still archetypal features that give substance to the very identity of the Romanian nation. Without a clearly shaped conscience of its identity, this social class is the one that supports the very edifice of the nation it is part of, with its impetus and enthusiasm, with its serenity and balance. Peasantry is the social class that has coagulated national spirit, throughout time, under the conditions of a history often unfavorable, when not plainly destructive. Out of the traditions, customs, and the unwritten laws generated by popular mentality, Rebreanu suggests, is born what we generically call “national specificity.” On the other hand, the writer aptly underscores the fact that the Romanian peasant is the one who has always known how to listen to “the voice of the earth,” being always attached to the cult of the spirit of the land, to the latent forces dwelling in the primordial depths of being. His devotion to tradition and his care to preserve authentic values unaltered turned the Romanian peasant into a preserver of the authentic Romanian soul in its fundamental dimensions. Rebreanu’s speech suggests, with much descriptive and evoking force, the mix of humility and force that gives birth to the identity of the Romanian peasant, often maltreated, resigned and brave, stoically accepting life’s trials and incorporating, in his own being, the cardinal virtues of the nation whose identity conscience he expresses. Rebreanu’s praise is, at the same time, moral reparation and a form of re-empowering of a social class disadvantaged by destiny and the avatars of an often-unfavorable history.

SACRED AND PROFANE IN TUDOR ARGHEZI'S POETRY

1. The drama of the poetical knowledge

Arghezi's literary activity takes place for more than seven decades, in a variety of unprecedented media forms. Therefore, Arghezi has alternated poetry with journalism, he founded magazines and newspapers, and he wrote pamphlets, novels and short stories. It can be said that Arghezi was a unique and uncomfortable personality, even if he collaborated with numerous publications, he didn't actually adhered to them emotionally and intellectually. Just like Al. Macedonski before, Arghezi naturally goes through more schools and literary ages; so that we can say that he was connected with the literary movements of his epoch, without any of them being able to clearly claim him. Arghezi's debut was under the sign of the Parnassian influence, without neglecting several themes, places belonging to the Semănătoriști, but cultivated in a period when the orientation was dissolving (*Archaeology, Welfare, Writing on a country house*). The poems with which Arghezi draws for the first time attention are those from the cycle *Black agate*, a unitary poetical cycle, which does not excel through originality, from which the author will publish several poems in the volume. The inspiration and the tone belong to Baudelaire, existing also echoes from Eminescu, echoes that will remain until late in the poet's elegiac-sentimental creation. In these beginning verses are felt the social mutiny tonalities (*Evening prayer*). Arghezi consolidates in this first stage a wider reputation of a pamphleteer of a high verbal violence and of a total lack of respect towards the personalities of the epoch. It can be said that, in Macedonski's case, the man caused a lot of damage to the work of art. After the appearance of his own newspaper, *Parrot's notes*, the writer plenary states his double vocation: that of a poet and of a lyrical pamphleteer. The drama of the poet, resides at Arghezi, precisely in the very losing of the consciousness, of the self, of the individual, but also from the absence of an authentic way of communicating with the others. Although the general tone of Arghezi's lyricism is rather dark, the poet tries the experience of a lucid vision, ignoring the self illusion or the delusion. There is, on the other hand, radicalism in the problematic of understanding in Arghezi's poetry, which turns out to be his intellectual sub layer. The failure of this continuous effort of inner clarifying represents the drama that gives a unique tension to the poems and to the humanising of the lyrical self. The poet doesn't try at all to break free from the earthly inferno, to escape into the transcendental. For Arghezi a space of the metaphysical hypothesis, as stated before, does not exist or of onirical and evocative nostalgias. The poets' dreams are actually real nightmares, hallucinations, conflicting states between the lucidity of the consciousness and the fears of the unknown. Arghezi's drama is that of a courageous, restless and lucid consciousness, although always contradicted by a mundane reality. At the origin of the argumentative, nonconformist attitude of the poet, resides an overuse of the perceptions, on a general basis of understanding. The horrible sight and the exaggerated sensitivity equally fuel up the poet's art, but also the pamphleteer's. The satirical writer's laughter always triggers the moment when he captures the ridicule or the grotesque, borderline states of the human condition. The general attitude of the writer is an opposing one, of passionate relentlessness that sometimes exceeds its object. The poet is, therefore, at the antipode of the classical artist, he does not try to stop the impulses that

come from his inner inferno. There are also oases of calm beauty within Arghezi's universe, so that his heavenly space is the ideal one, that of simple nature, of the children, of the bugs and of the animals. The thinking, that the poet calls, in a verse, "poison" intervenes in this heavenly universe with its doubts and fears, so that this inherited paradise is only an ideal. In the context of his literary work, the poet is situated in a significant contrast with the regressive, nostalgic style of the spirits who are looking for "the poeticism" in intellectual or rational formulas. In 1961, Tudor Vianu shows that "Arghezi's historical role was to get over Eminescu's poems, still present in the work of many contemporary poets of his generation. The renewal of the Romanian lyricism, its taking away from the paths set by the influence of the *Star's* poet, is the most important consequence made by its affirmation from the second decade of our century". The volume *The right words* allows the approximation of the temporary levels, starting with the Parnassian and symbolist accents (*The mystical cup*, *Caligula*) to Eminescu's thoughts in the erotic elegies from *Black agate*. The cycle of the *Psalms* constitutes the dramatic nucleon of Arghezi's poetical vision. Man and God appear to be disputing without the possibility of finding a solution, filled with the fervour of the search and of identification. A profoundly religious poet, Arghezi assumes a paradox condition: of not accepting the belief, realising the impossibility of the living and of the authentic religious feeling outside the general belief.

The cosmic and the miniature become familiar dimensions of this lyricism that hesitate between the sweetness of childhood and the infernal toughness of the social visions. From the purity of the erotic mystery, to the metaphysical turmoil when facing death – the poet's consciousness has a winding way. Arghezi's poetical discourse manifests itself through the direct confession or through the most unexpected metaphorical structures, so that Arghezi's poetry is nothing like any tradition neither by syntax nor by style. *Mildew flowers* (1931) express the experience of detention, the poems can also be read in a symbolical register, as the waiting room for death, description of a conflicting universe, where the primal human instincts abandon the masks of the conventions and reveal the nakedness of desperation. The enclosed space (the monastery hut, the prison cell) transmits the fear of the aggression and the tendency to escape. The humanity of the *Mildew flowers* is attacked, and the common state of the lyrical self is that of a nightmare made up of monstrous figurations. In these poems the fantastic of the vision sets free grotesques figures, the human being replaced with the beastlike. The gallery of representatives is sublime: hallucinating persons, androgens, instable, people tortured by the idea of a sin imagine a world tormented by dreams, murders and wild instincts. Arghezi's eros is no longer melancholy similar to Eminescu's poems, but physiological fever, biblical temptation and nightmare of the senses (*Streche*, *Rada*, *Tinca*). The woman is, here, the embodiment of demon like, as seen in the loners' visions. In the big picture scenes from these volumes (*Dinner*, *Morning*, *The Dead*, *Prisons*, *The Convoy*) the idea of domination is raised to the dimensions of the human condition itself. The fantastic tendency is also present here, where life behind bars offers situations of a savouring reality, narrated, with a movement of the epic that hesitates between the pure picturesque and the suggestion of the chimera (*Chickens*, *Let the drum kill him*). Coming down from a modern hell, *Mildew flowers* also symbolises to set free an imaginary demon. With his contrasting imagination, the renegade from *Mildew flowers* returns to the familiar universe from *Little book for the evening* (1935) volume that can be considered a "book of the hours" written in a retraced, calm tone. The poetical accents purify here in a bucolical atmosphere similar to Vergiliu's, the poet finding again the pure emotion of a paradise like space, identified in the familiar universe of the domestic world, of living amongst plants and animals. The ceremony of love is transcribed in tones of ode,

these “evening verses” being the expression of a naive, decorative and sort of minor drawing. The verses from *Horas* amplify this aphoristic point of view, of a graceful and fragile game. The game like perspective enhances, in *Horas* with a grotesque-pamphleteer perspective, a sign of the presence of the lucid moralist and of the observant of the social evil. “The horas” are also games imagined by the poet for his children, but under the game like-childish aspect of the verses, we can notice even the sarcastic accents, which cover the pamphlet or the Aesopian fable. The same ambiguity (suavity/grotesque) is a characteristic of his prose, from the novels *The eyes of Jesus’ Mother*, *The cemetery Good-spread*, *Lina*. An important feature of Arghezi’s poetry is the richness of the thematic register, as well as the diversity of formulas and lyrical methods. Arghezi is a protean poet, whose expressions always take on new faces, sometimes conflicting.

A fundamental theme of Arghezi’s lyricism is that of the big, existential questions about man, represented by the *philosophical and moral* poem. This theme appears in all Arghezi’s volumes, from *The right words* (1927) to the volume *The night* (1967). The best known poems that work with this theme are the *Psalms*. The notion of *psalms* goes through major changes, because Arghezi’s psalms don’t have an exclusive religious character and they do not resume to the attitude of praising the divine being. *The Psalms* are a philosophical poem where the poet asks himself a number of questions related to the meaning and the condition of man in the universe. The poet seems to be talking to a Heaven where God does not reside; he addresses an absence of the divinity. Faith combines with contestation. *The psalms* show an attitude of doubt and search, but also a dramatic situation, one of crisis of communication between man and divine. The poet’s suffering comes from the fact that, not having a religious certainty, in his soul the unbearable consciousness of the loneliness that the human being has in the universe comes to life: “I am so lonely, God and across / Lonely tree forgotten in the field...” This absence of the Creator calls, with the help of long-lasting harmonies, for the presence of the creator. By not considering Heaven sacred any more, Arghezi sacralises simultaneously life, the human beings, the plants and the animals. Arghezi’s paradise must be looked for on Earth, among the most humble beings, and not in bare Heaven, where nobody lives. In the poet’s imagination, Heaven is “caught in nails” and “padlocks”. God is the Lord, the Father, the Dad but also Somebody, Someone, Nobody, Who knows who. For Arghezi, outside of life, that represents the ultimate good of man, there is no precipice, no death. Arghezi’s philosophical lyricism is the place for dramatic questions, with no answer, of inner struggles of the poet with himself, of sentimental tortures, but also of the joy of living. Another important theme of Arghezi’s poetry is love. In the beginning poems (*Melancholy*, *Autumn*, *Breaking up*, *Lost bones*), Arghezi cultivates a sort of erotic elegy inspired from Eminescu, where meetings and separations of the lovers asre provoked in an autumn monotonous atmosphere.

The volume which contains the most erotic poems is *Little book for the evening* from 1935. In this volume’s poems, the poet imagines the terrestrial space like a heavenly space where the lovers live in complete harmony with the world, with the creatures. Arghezi’s paradise is a religious and pagan one, the result of a cosmic vision. Love is regarded by the poet simultaneously in its spirituality and its material form. In this universe, the woman appears like a graceful deity who communicates directly with the creatures of the world. In the poem *The Bride* the calling in nature is done by the man who says words of a fascinating ritual. Arghezi cherishes the feminine beauty (that of the “velvet eyes”, “eyelids' hem” etc.). Arghezi’s love knows all the variety of attitudes, from the chaste, honest love to the firing sensuality. In many poems, love is presented like an illness, like an unreachable desire (the motive of the flying lover). The first

volume representative for the social theme is *Mildew flowers*. In these poems, Arghezi becomes the echo of the “aesthetics of the ugly”, widening the sphere of artistic expressivity to the areas considered so far anaesthetic. *Mildew flowers* represent, as previously mentioned, the biggest work to “recover” the ugly from the Romanian literature. Jargon, abject, delicate, suave words intermingle in an extremely expressive poetic language. The mentioned environment is that of the slumber, of prison, presented in different visions: grotesque and bitter or ironic. The aesthetic recovery of this degraded existential environment has to be understood also as a moral recovery, so that, just like there is an aesthetic beauty in the “ugly” sides of the existence, in the same way there is a morality in the degradation and in the filthiness. Man is retrievable, no matter how low he got – here is one of the sub textual ideas of *Mildew flowers*. Arghezi’s social lyricism is much more comprehensive.

In the poem *Testament*, for instance, “the book” is regarded as the inheritance of a long tradition, the tradition of the many, from whose language “with advice for cattle” the poet manages to find “the right words”. In 1907 – *Landscapes*, Arghezi gathers more paintings that make out a narration in verses of different moments and characters of the 1907 mutiny. The atmosphere of the mutiny is made by a summation of various procedures (the satire, the political pamphlet, the elegy and the description etc.). The social poem the most important in length and intentions is *Singing to the man*, a sociologic poem where the author traces the origin and the evolution of man on Earth, “through ages, decades and millenniums”. The birth and the evolution of the social man allow the poet to use verses where he praises innate talents of man and his aspiration to reason. *The theme of the game* (of the seed and of the crumb) is one of the most meaningful in the entire creation of Arghezi. The game is a central motive in Arghezi’s work. In the verses and the prose from *Weeds*, *Tokens*, *The book with toys*, *What do you have against me, wind?*, Arghezi imagines a miniature, childish universe, filled with delicate creatures. The world from these verses seems to be copying the real one, at a smaller scale. By shrinking things even the parody of serious elements, Arghezi simulates the dimensions of the concrete reality, revealing new meanings. Besides the visionary, fantasist poet there is also a craftsman poet, who stands out through an inexhaustible linguistic mastery, by unpredictable associations, by an unexpected, own syntax. Unlike the other modern poets, where the word is a *sign* related to the intellect, Arghezi is a sensual person with a primitive voluptuousness; ready to use the touch, the sight and the other senses, to enjoy of the mater’s concreteness: “The word is like the rock or it is soft like the snail. They attack like the wasps or they comfort you like the cold, they squash you like the sponge or they caress you like the rosy dew”. Arghezi’s originality of the poem does not result from the statistical frequency of archaisms and regionalisms, but from their rhythm. The chanting from the *Welfare*, the metaphorical monologue from the *Spiritual*, the symbolic-allegoric form from *Linger*, all these take their sap almost entirely from the popular lexical basis. Balancing wondering between earth and transcendently, Arghezi is not per say a poet of nature, although this dimension is present. Therefore, *the mountain*, *the eagles*, *the sea*, *the tree* have a symbolic significance, just like *forever*, *the light*, *the mystery*. The picturesque images, the chromatic nuances are oriented towards refinement and tenderness. Similarly to Blaga and Sadoveanu, the biblical savour tends to create an atmosphere of a genuine myth. Just like Eminescu, Arghezi invents some verbal forms, when he adds to the feeling a necessary nuance (“the ink pot”, “barren Golgota”, “boyish girl”, “the afternoons” etc.). Arghezi does not have an equal concerning the metaphoric language. Demigod, creator of possible worlds, with the help of the *created word*, the poet tends to measure with *the fiery word* of nature. Poet of fundamental questions concerning the

existence, moralist and creator involved in the social problems of his time, Arghezi enrolls in the highest trajectory of the Romanian verse. His creation represents a decisive contribution to the development and renewal of the Romanian lyricism, both by problematic and the artistic means used.

2. Sacred and profane in Arghezi's *Psalms*

As in most of Arghezi's *Psalms*, that dialectic of prayer and unwillingness to forgive, of humility and ego shapes up in the psalm *I could live forever if accompanied...*, as we find the antinomy sacred/demon like, antinomy that comes from the poet's God like temper, overwhelmed by the materiality of the world, but on the other hand, trying to discover the religious truth, to reach spirituality, God. In the first lines the poet notices an inadequacy between the insufficient linguistic instruments that he has – words- and the unlimited, surrounded by mystery space, which he has to designate: Transcendence. The Godliness cannot be written through the poetic vocal, the divinity always escapes the poet's attempts to set it in verse. Therefore, the poet is in a permanent search for new lyrical ways capable to capture something from God's aura, but in the same time his own turmoil related to the opposition between his perishable, ephemeral condition and the boundary free horizon where the divinity subscribes: "I could live forever accompanied / To take her partner in my thoughts;/ New violins to charm, a new melody / To find – and fast, difficult verses. // anyway, the band can play, / If a press the bow, if I pinch its strings. / A restless heavenly passion / My arm twitches, my soul burns". To the irrepressible need to put down in the verse the interior turmoil or the godliness burning it matches, in the second part of the psalm a movement of rebellion, of mutiny against a God who calls, at some point, to death so many earth like beauties ("The woman's body, the embraced one, / I will not bring to you, soft and mellow; / Only the suffering of the sky, too bad / It's not there to stir Jordan's water"). The last stanza of the poem is a comeback, after the previous heightening moment, to the world of darkness and rotten, of atrocious materiality and of enclosed suffering into the infernal circle of the body: "I want to die in darkness and rotten, / Not bothered by slave, determined and sickened. / And don't let them know that you used to comfort me / And that inside me you used to live". The Psalm shows the reader several contradictory lyrical attitudes, one of heightening, of stamina to God and another one, an opposing one of seclusion in the darkness of the body, but also a titanic mutiny facing a given unbearable. In the psalm *I am so alone, my God and crooked! ...* Arghezi's specific attitude towards divinity is noted: that of isolation, of not being able to do anything and of resignation, of having been gifted and a pointless aspiration towards a sky that remains "closed" that does not send any sign to the one who is waiting cold, thirsty for the divine fruit. The word "crooked" together with the epithet "alone", plastically characterises the position he admits in the non limitation of the universe: the exceptional one, of thinking out of the box, of surpassing the norms and the natural, of being situated at the edge, at the boundaries of the world. The poet resembles a tree with bitter fruits, lacking the beauty and the force, a tree situated at the outskirts of life, almost mortified, waiting for small tokens and songs, proofs of life and of good fruit: "I am so alone, my God and crooked! / Stranded tree forgotten in the field, / with bitter fruit and with leaves / thorny and rugged. // I long for the chirpy bird / To stop on its way, / To sing inside of me and to fly away / Through my shadow of smoke. // I am waiting for small token of affection, / Small songs of sparrows and martin/ To be given to me, / Just like the fruit trees that taste good. // I don't have pink nectars of am, / Not even the aroma

of the first sour grapes, / And captured deeply between forever and the fog, / 'The soft caterpillars won't stay on my rind'. The aspiration to the divine tremor is, therefore, that of a being who discovers with painful lucidity its own frailty and limitation in the patterns of an ephemeral body. The poet has in the poem *My prayer is without words* secret shivering and unheard harmony in a delicate and sober verse. In Arghezi's vision, the word is incapable of remembering the divine's final mystery, to express the ravishing settlements of God, to be in a total communion with the high stature, unenclosed of the transcendental. The silence, as a major power of the untold messages, but present *in nuce* in the undefined absence of the word is the best way to express the divine unsaid, to sustain the communion with the eternal being: "My prayer is without words, / And the song, my God, is without voice. / I don't ask you of anything. I remind you of nothing. / From your eternity I am not even a clock. // Not even the prayer, maybe, it is not a prayer, / Perhaps not even my man is human. / I burn to you slowly, like a brand, / I am looking for you mute, I imagine you, I think of you".

The need to communicate with the deity is irrepressible. The poet, thirsty for certainties, wants to assume the knowledge of God in concrete-sensorial data. The heart of the poet, "opened with seven cups" is just like a receiver trying to get the divine gift, to transform in the highest and authentic way: "My eye is alive, my power is complete / And I gaze at you through your white clothing / So that my mind can understand / Without kneeling to the Earth. / The arrow of the night daily breaks its point / and daily reunites with metal. / My soul, opened with seven cups, / Awaits for a crystal peeping, / On a towel with light girdles". The incertitude, the tormenting thirst for truth and light, the vocation of the fulfilment and the powerlessness to authentically communicate with the divine – all these states overlap in the intensity of the verse, offering spiritual tension and emotional dynamism to the poetry. The last stanza marks the state of purity where we await for the divine message, the clarity of thought and feeling of the poetic message ("All set for dinner, the table, / Remains set from lunch. / Oh my God, I am surrounded like a garden, / Where a foal grazes"). Thrilled by the rumour of transcendence, the poet tries new ways to communicate, to have a dialogue with a divinity that does not show up, that refuses to appear in all its fullness. The state of *deus absconditus* is best shown in the psalm *I don't ask of you something very difficult...*, where the suffering comes from the *absence* of the divine. The horrible silence of the strengths, the cloth of eternity and the refuge in an oppressed historical time, the suggestion of extinction, of "decades that perish" put in value the consciousness of a lonely poet, who really feels the fear of not being and the pain of his own loneliness: "I don't ask of you something very difficult / In my cold, desperate suffering. / If I started to pay attention to you, / I want you to talk to your slave more often. // Ever since the Holly Bible has been written / You didn't step foot in here / The years fade away and the skies die / Here below you, underneath the sky". The apocalyptic vision, that the poet envisages lyrically in this psalm results from the very perspective of the "not showing up" of the divinity. A taste of ash, an inert dynamic of negativity and a step back into the impure world of materiality are felt here. The shredding of the poet is the result of the absence of the sign coming from God. The poet does not feel at all a chosen one, therefore his drama, his suffering due to the lack of the divine message. The communication man/divinity is excluded or at least put under a question mark: "When the wizards followed a star, / you talked to them and it was possible. / When Josef had to go as well, / you found him written in the papers / and you sent him an angel to guide him -/ and the angel stood there. / Your angels used to take care in those days / of the baby and the man with the woman. // only to me, the long-lasting and good God, / didn't send, how long

have I been praying, nothing...” The poet talks about a time of regress, of decline concerning the dialogue man/divinity. The man cannot find the language that might define his own aspirations to the infinite, to the absolute; he lost his capacity of simply saying his own self.

The poet’s prayer gets, in the psalm *I value you in noise and in silence*, the resonance of a scream and the lack of indulgence of an accusation. *Belief* and *patience* are the two attitudes that overwhelm the poet’s soul, shared between the terrestrial space and eternity, between sacred and profane, between the ephemeral and precarious condition and the aspiration to the strengthens of the transcendence. A transcendence that does not reveal itself, but it always hides, camouflages its strength, retreats in an inaccessible space. The divinity does not favour communication between its creatures, leaving to them the perplexity of faith and negation, of begging and contestation. The rhetorical negations used by the poet in the first stanza have the very role of amplifying the tension created by man’s powerlessness, of the humble creature’s having a dialogue with divinity. The search is in vain, the prayer remains unanswered, all of these offering the poetic attitudes a taste of meaningless search (“I value you in noise and in silence / and I stalk you like a pray, / To see: are you my wanted falcon? / Shall I kill you? Or kneel and ask you. // For faith or for patience, / I look for you brave and in vain. / You are my dream, of all, the beautiful one / And I don’t dare to take you down from the sky”). The entire restlessness of Arghezi’s tormented spirit by the irreversible contradictions is found here, in these verses that claim the revealing of Divinity, of the dream “from all of them beautiful”, a dream that remains unapproachable and undetectable. The revelation does not take place, the hydrophane is always postponed, and the sacred remains in disguise in the prosaic precarious magma. The tormenting sentimental torture comes from here: from the poet’s weakness of having certitudes concerning God. Scattered in everything, the Divine does not reveal as itself, does not show his mightiness, enhancing the need for truth and the poet’s thirst for the authentic: “Like the mirroring of a water road, / You appear to be or not to be; / I noticed you among the fish with the stars, / Like the wild bull when he grazes. // All alone now, in your big story, / I stay with you to measure myself some more, / without wanting to win. / I want to touch you and to scream: «There it is!»”. The Demonic and dominant substrate of Arghezi’s rational approach here is to shape the image of a poet tormented by the inner disturbing contradictions.

In the psalm *To touch you, crawling on the root*, Arghezi returns to his own artistic condition driven by straying and failures, by temporary days and the demonic of the destroying time. The thirst for the absolute and the powerlessness of being to your own expectations, the tension towards ideal and the impossibility to reach it are the structural data of Arghezi’s poetical being that can be found in this psalm. The crisis state remains similarly affected both sentimentally and stylistically, the dialectic of the approach and of the distance to the divinity is still alive. We have to state out the fact that Arghezi’s poetical language receives here an extra concreteness, a special power, by the use of terms with the taste of wine, the suggestion of the living, the dynamic of the empiric reality. “Crawling”, “field”, “coast”, “ravines”, “cliffs” etc. These are such words which offer effects of closeness to reality, of the world seen with passion, absorbed in the verse. Two instances collide here: that of the horizon and of frailty (“the straw”) and that of verticality (“the cliff”). They are equally two existential and moral posts. One of the inert living, of the retraction, the other one of the daring, of the enthusiasm for the unknown, of severe interrogation: “In order to touch you, crawling on the root, / On many occasions I moved stems, / In the field, in the coast, in the ravines and on the top, / Alive when I climb and sad when I find myself there. // I was a straw and I made it on the mountain, / A tall and proud cliff that you make a bridge /

On the heads, from the world to forever. / And I listened to the tic-tac beating”. The last two stanzas bring onto the stage a different attitude, one of humiliation of the being that carries in himself the burden of so many tormenting questions, of the exceptional being that lives under the spell of “forever” and who wants to regain its humane, too humane condition (“I would humiliate myself now and I would pray: / Set me straight from my path. / Move from the fog the hand that the mountains have crushed / and, all together, bring it to my forehead”). The refuge in the world of art, in the interior universe brings a whole new different perspective: the poet considers that God can also be found inside the human being, under the form of a delicate and redeemed prayer.

Because he couldn't understand... might be the most pathetic psalm in Arghezi's work. The tone of the poem is that of a retained complaining, of the interrogation with the solemn and serious diction. If generically “the poet is foremost the man of the knowledge thirst” (N. Balotă), this psalm can be considered the insatiable search of the divine, search that does no longer have insurgent accents, doubt does not have the negating pathos of imprecation, and the dynamics of the lyrical discourse receives a certain god like posture. The poet's questions have now an unsettled melancholic air, just like the taste of the powerless knowledge is overwhelming, and the burden of the turmoil – relentless. God is first imagined in his will like posture, authoritarian and vindictive, of unimaginable dimensions, which the people have put in anthropological patterns: “Because he couldn't understand you / Their nothingness of dream and clay, / The Saints let me know they have seen you / and that you were wearing a stick and a whole beard. // You often let yourself seen by the creature / and always in emperor's clothes, / threatening and only upset, / that even the vultures were scared of you. // In Eve's paradise, through the forest, / Like in the sad forever that was to come, / Your holly mouth, all the Fathers know, / Only opened to curse us”. The last two stanzas underline the pathetic side of Arghezi's religious feeling, a held pathos of a self tormented by shattering questions related to his own existence and regarding the rapport between being and Godliness. The humiliation takes the place of insurgence, and the absence of divinity challenges, as Nicolae Manolescu notices, “the unbearable consciousness of loneliness in the universe”. The fervour of the interrogation turns into begging, and the search has more and more the character of an attempt to empathically identify the self with what is above human nature, the divinity: “Lord, my inspiration and my songs! / My hope and my labour! / From which alive seeds of stars / I try to freeze a grain of bead. // You are and have been more than naturally / you almost were, stayed and lived, / you are like a thought, you are and you aren't, / between willingness and memory”. Withdrawn in his self, into the maze of the absolute callings, the poet will not stop expressing his doubts, anxieties, and the tormenting questions concerning his own being, over God and about his place in the infinity of the universe. The communication like a *deus absconditus* gradually turns into a monologue of knowledgeable exasperation, of the lack of god like significance.

3. Arghezi's eros

The feeling of love is explored in more registers by Arghezi: the carnal love, the domestic one, the suavity of falling in love, the demonic love and the sublimated one – all these instances of the feeling are found in the lyrics. *Morgenstimmung* is a poem in which the author catches exactly that undefined state, almost unreal of being in love, of love's exuberance, of the magic that brings together two beings until they are melted. The communion between the lovers is favoured by the

“song”, a song with colourful sonorities, that gets into the poet’s locked “monastery”: “You sneaked your song into me / One afternoon when, / The window of the soul, well bolted / Opened in the wind, / without knowing I will hear you singing. // Your song filled the entire building, / The drawers, the boxes, the carpets, / Like a loud lavender. Here you are, / the bolts got out, / and the monastery remained unlock.” The dialectic of love, its fragile mechanism, the mixture of sensations and thoughts, of instinct and pure affection that are its composition can be seen here. The feminine presence is in the same time corporal, but also ideal; it has both suggestions and suavity belonging to the angelic, but also demonic accents, enveloped in a halo of mystery, difficult to comprehend into the rationality’s horizon.

The show of love once started gets more and more ample resonances into the poet’s soul; it receives entirely new dimensions and accents. It is like a change of zodiac, a change of the paradigm belonging to the human being. The consciousness of the lyrical, retracted, “narrow-minded” self, as it has been noticed, reverberates acutely in the notes of the erotic feeling, when seeing the loved person, who appears accompanied by the elements of nature, which penetrate “the chamber of the closed universe”. So love is accompanied by an acute, troubling notification of the outside world, of the exterior universe. The echoes of the feeling of love so powerful, drive us to a weakening of the certitudes prior to the poet’s being, they move his ideas to a new register, that of sensitivity and permeability to the beauties of nature: “And maybe it would have been nothing / Unless he got in to dig, / with the song and your little finger, / that would caress the blackbirds on the keys -/ And all your being, up close. // With the thunder also came down the clouds / in the chamber of the closed universe. / The storm had brought the cranes, / the bees, the leaves ... they are / wrecked, the beams, like flower’s sheets”. “The acknowledgement” of the loved one, about which Octavio Paz talks in *The double flame. Love and erotic* is produced through the body and the closed affects in an instinct of a subtle competence, an instinct that notices, like a seismograph of feelings, the irresistible attraction towards a certain person, the involuntary communion with him. Communion that is not made without a crash of the self identity with the being, without a deep disturbance, which reveals the soul giving it a new identity, a new existential contour, a new life. This is noticed, in a commentary, by Alexandru George, the author of an interesting monographic study dedicated to Arghezi (*The Great Alpha*): “The process of penetrating the beloved one in what the poet refers to as his locked monastery, takes in the third stanza the material shape of the digging. And to enhance the messy feeling that this irresistible and shroud invasion has done, the fourth stanza gives «the building» the shape of a raggedy ruin, without a roof”. In the infallible substance of the feeling of love comes into play an acute sense of ephemeral; life and death come together here, the suffering and the pleasure come so close that we cannot tell them apart, up and down are in a paradoxical relationship of communion. The contingent and the absolute touch each other, life and death are a part of a disturbing feeling of love: “Why did you sing? Why did I hear you? / You vaporously lost yourself in me -/ not separated – in the skies. / I was coming from above, you were coming from below. / You were coming from the living; I was coming from the dead”. *Morgenstimmung* is one of the most turmoil love poems of Arghezi. The sense of closeness between the two beings, the anxiety, the crash of self confidence, the ecstasy and the thanatos tremor, the revealing of new existential dimensions – all of the above are found in Arghezi’s lyrics, where the abstract notions become plasticised into actual words, almost material, sensitive and almost corporal.

A poem of the miniature related to the erotic feeling, of the decorative and of the lexical game like come to life in *Linger*. It is not by chance that the poem’s rhythm has folkloric

resonances and accents of spell. Because love is shown here, like in the popular mythology, under the spectrum of mystery and the infusion of fantastic. The feeling of love is captured in a new instance: that of sickness, craving, and deep suffering that leads to lethargy of the being, to a deafening cureless pain. The addressing is direct, involved, mostly in the second person, with several constructions in the first and third person. Also the poem is characterised by a certain narration that puts in value a “pedagogical” finality of a universally recognised value. The poet feels sorry for “the girl” who, stung “in the top of her foot” lost her balance, her peace, her serenity, craving for something else. Under the empire of the feeling of love, the existential regime of the girl has changed; her being altered her allure, receiving new shades of life. We can talk about a slow, vegetative and vegetal living, of aboulie where we feel comfortable with all the changes that go on in his being, but which cannot be explained. The invasion of the feeling of love is also accompanied by anxiety and hope, of longing and unclear trust, of resignation and organic debility: “Our girl is sick, / Mine and the longings. / In her tiptoe / was stung with poison / by the thorn caught between lilies and laurel. // Girl, didn’t I tell you / to wear the golden shoes, / to lock yourself into the tower, / to charm your paths, / to play with the Holy Spirit / and only with the dawns / to sit on the Earth? / Didn’t I tell you to put at your heels / Sulphide flower / and, just like the star, to caress / the thorns with light? / To be the flower that separates its / beauty from the dust / and lives up there, far away, / her one week life? / Didn’t I tell you in the evening, in the morning, / all of the above, three times each? ”. Then follows a descriptive passage, where the comparison that describes the regime of the illness is also from the vegetal area. The acute, silent, unknown, inexplicable suffering induced by the thrills of love is suggestively framed in a space of setting and miniature, with oriental resonances (“The girl lies down in bed, / Frail and sleepy / Like on a silver, expensive tray”).

The next poetic sequence resides under the sign of hypothesis, of potential, of an “*als ob*”. The poet imagines the making of the girl like a mixture of cosmic and terrestrial, of natural and supernatural. It is a fabulous image that resides under the sign of the fictional, with writings of rare words, with suggestions of precious stones and of unexpected sparkling; the pearls, the rubies, the topaz, the stars – are elements of such an unexpected gathering, from the fantastic and the setting domain. On the other hand, the miniature and the ample perspective meet, the sky and the Earth come together in a suggestive attempt to set the girl free from her illness and suffering: “I hadn’t been from the beginning / To have made you myself, / with my fingers, / from stars and rings! / I would have put on you, so that you don’t suffer, / eyelids taken from the water lilies, / eyes as big as a dew bean, / fireflies in new moon. / Your breasts, like two blackbird’s babies, / I would have put each of them in a pearl. / and on every cheek / a ruby or a topaz”. The last part of the poem represents an acceptance of the girl’s earthling condition, and implicitly a realisation of human love and common living, of the suffering of love as an experience and adventure of the being involved in the horizon of knowledge from now and here a (“But if think about it, / It’s better to be just like you are, / to sting yourself, to crash yourself / through earthling goods”). Arghezi’s eros goes, in the poem *Linger*, in a whole new dimension: that of the relevance of the body’s suffering, of organic disorder caused by love. Love’s sickness is the sign of the beginning of a new existential regime, of a new status of the being, with different sides, revealing for the immeasurable availabilities of the human soul.

Expression of disappointment and existential disabuse, *Barefoot verses* represent a complaint on the theme of the irreversible passing of time, of the human destiny marked by ephemeris and precarity, of the lack of hope and trust in man. The dialogue between the poet and man sets a

lyric scenario where the dominant feelings are the melancholy, the nostalgia, the pain of losing the being, of the wandering in a pointless world and without a coherent finality. Between acceptance and non acceptance of his own condition, the poet bears in his verses the trademarks of the suffering of living and of the passing. His crying is a metaphysical one and in the same time of a disturbing concreteness. It is not by chance that the setting where this poetic scenario takes place is one of ruins and of destruction, of deep loneliness and bitter memory (“Why are you sitting man, in these lonely ruins crying?”). The man’s crying is inflicted by all the suffering in the world, by the degradation of his own being and by the other’s sufferings. It is a tearing crying, a begging that sounds agonic in a world of ontological, disabled, out of use significances: “The storks of the days passing with a black wing each cry. / The days that go by cry. / The children without parents cry, / the hungry beings from the wood cry at night; the beasts, the snakes, the raw, gentle creatures. / The deceived women, the lied men cry. / The subdued people cry, / the hopeless people cry. / The birds and the slaughtered cattle cry. / And the lost times cry. / I feel sorry for my sins. I cry because time does not return. / I cry because the man goes away and returns only looking down, / as if looking for his grave. / He cries about me, the one you sang about”. The poet’s complaining is therefore started by the tacit acceptance of his perishable condition, of perceiving his own destiny from the perspective of hopelessness and frailty. The horizon of the self narrows down, the duration is stopped, the verse turns into deafening mourning, and the communication with the self’s instances and with the others becomes unbearable, residing under the sign of a knowledgeable apories, just like in the Psalms or in a few other poems that exist under the sign of erotic dissatisfaction.

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LUCIAN BLAGA – METHAPHYSICAL COORDINATES OF THE POETIC DISCOURSE

Preliminaries

Born on 9 May 1895, Lancrăm (Sebeș-Alba), Lucian Blaga dies on 6 May 1961, in Cluj. After primary school in Lancrăm and Sebeș (Alba), he continues his schooling at “Andrei Șaguna” High-school in Brașov, and at Sibiu Theological Seminary (1914-1917), where he enrolls to avoid his recruitment in the Austro-Hungarian army. He continues his studies at the Faculty of Philosophy of Wien University and becomes doctor in philosophy with the thesis *Culture and Knowledge* (1920). He enters diplomacy as a press attaché and counselor at the Romanian Legations in Warsaw, Prague, Bern, Wien, Lisbon. In 1936 he becomes member of the Romanian Academy (the reception discourse is suggestively entitled *Eulogy to the Romanian village*). He is a professor at the Culture Philosophy department of University of Cluj, especially created for him (1939-1948). After the education reform he is dismissed and becomes a researcher at the Institute of History and Philosophy of Cluj (1949-1953) and at the section of literary history and folklore of the Academy, Cluj branch (1953-1959). Lucian Blaga was also a founding member of the journal *Gândirea*, chief-editor of the journals *Cultura*, *Patria*, *Banatul*, *Voința*. In 1943 he edits the philosophy journal *Saeculum* in Sibiu. His first poetry is published in the newspaper *Tribuna* in Arad (1910). He also collaborates with: *Românul*, *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, *Convorbiri literare*, *Pagini literare*, *Luceafărul*, *Viața românească*, *Cuvântul*, *Revista Fundațiilor regale*, *Steaua*, *Contemporanul*.

He starts his literary career with the volume *Poeemele luminii* (1919), followed by other poetry volumes: *Pașii profetului* (1921), *În marea trecere* (1924), *Lauda somnului* (1929), *La cumpăna apelor* (1933), *La curțile dorului* (1938), *Nebănuitele trepte* (1943). Posthumous poetry: *ciclurile Vârsta de fier*, *Cântecul focului*, *Corăbii cu cenușă*, *Ce aude unicornul*. Poetry of great vital impetuses projected on a cosmic scale and of the Dionysian identification of the Self with the primary universe (in his first volumes), Blaga's lyric witnesses an evolution marked by the drama of the “metaphysical sadness” of the problematic man estranged from genesis “mysteries” of the universe and aspiring to the recovery of the originary equilibrium, under the sign of a “reintegration myth” in an ideal space of Romanian spirituality.

Blagian dramaturgy (*Zamolxe* 1921, *Tulburarea apelor* 1923, *Meșterul Manole* 1927, *Cruciada copiilor* 1930, *Avram Iancu* 1934) is characteristic to the expressionistic dominant feature of Blaga's writings. The writer highlights in his plays the existential elementary of symbolic and mythic origin, in conjunction with the aspiration to the absolute. The mythic is interweaved with the historical, and the absolute with the contingent get reconciled.

The philosophic work is very large and it is organized in four trilogies (of knowledge, of culture, of values and cosmological), making up a system where “pure thinking” substantially communicates with the “mystic thinking”. As a matter of fact poetry and philosophy are co-substantial at Blaga because the lyric delight is nourished with serious interrogations regarding the existence and the philosophical thinking surprises through the metaphorical density the poetry vision as well. Blaga's philosophical system is centered on the issue of knowledge and on that of culture philosophy. In the center of knowledge problematic is the *mystery*, an element that defines

human existence; in Blaga's vision, man is an amphibious being that is living submerged both in the real world and in the mystery. Through art, religion and philosophy, man aspires to the revelation of mystery, but the "Transcendent Censorship" established by the *Great Anonym* (Divinity) between him and humankind prevents the understanding of the existential essence. Through dogma man has to accept the mystery as such.

According to Blaga there are two types of knowledge: *paradisiacal* knowledge, logical, rational, that tends to reduce mystery by conceptualization and *luciferian* knowledge, whose purpose is not revealing the mystery but its potentiating character. In the area of culture philosophy Blaga uses the concept of *style*, a group of features determined by unconscious factors and influenced by a spacial and temporal horizon. According to this vision, the specific of the Romanian culture is the "mioritic space"- a spacial horizon defined by *plain* (valley/hill alternation). This *mioritic space* is evoked by means of *doina*, a literary species that expresses the melancholy of a soul that ascends and descends "on an indefinite wavy level." In the domain of style philosophy, Blaga considers that metaphor is of two types: *plasticizing* metaphor, that aims at assigning material form to an act of life, without imaginatively enriching its content and the *revealing* metaphor that aims at revealing an essential mystery.

Blaga's work is completed by a collection of aphorisms (*Pietre pentru templul meu*, *Elanul insulei*, *Discobalul*) and essays (*Isvoade*, *Aspecte antropologice*, *Fiuța istorică*, *Încercări filosofice*).

Blaga's memoirs include *Hronicul și cântecul vârstelor* (1965) and a posthumous novel *Luntrea lui Caron* – with evident autobiographical elements.

The evolution of the lyric universe. Metaphysic impetus and poetic expression

The poetry of Lucian Blaga has been framed by the literary criticism mainly as representative for expressionism with metaphysic support. Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu notices in this respect that "the impressive work of the poet represents the highest expression of the metaphysical sensibility in Romanian literature" (1). "Violent modernist, even expressionist in his dramas", "anti-symbolist in poetry" (E. Lovinescu), Blaga is, in the vision of the critic Marin Mincu, "the first great Romanian poet that manages to finally synchronize the Romanian poetic forms with the European ones." Actually Marin Mincu is the most fervent supporter of Blagian expressionism: „If we are to exclude Urmuz [...] and Tristan Tzara [...], Blaga stays as our most representative poet as regards the performance of one of the major revolutionary tendencies within the exclusively autochthonous space. This is the manifestation of the expressionist poetic tendency." (2) or "In the main, [...], Lucian Blaga will rewrite the repertoire of the traditional poetry conferring it its effective participation to the modern myth of poetry especially by its conscious affiliation to the expressionist poetic method" (3). Another critic that dealt with the Blagian lyric, Ion Mariș, observes the existence of a convergence correlation between traditional and modern: „Expressionist poetics becomes in the case of Blaga a generous synthesis of modernist avangardistic art in its form (thus one that separates from tradition, at least on the level of the text rhetoric), but traditional in its content. This «content» must be searched for, as Blaga demonstrates us, in the ancestral foundation of our spirituality, in the tamed Thracian-Dacian Dionysian, then in the Sophic-Apollonian light." (4)

For Blaga the village represents a matrix space, an original element where human being finds its plenitude and ontological harmony, surpassing the impasses and the gnosiologic apories that lead to alienation, distancing from "the mystery horizon." Within the *mioritic space*, Lucian Blaga realizes that in *doina*, an expression of archaic and sacred character of the rural space, „the

melancholy, neither too heavy, nor too light, of a soul that ascends and descends on an indefinite wavy level, further and further, again and again, or the missing of a soul that wants to go over the hill as an obstacle of fate and who will always have another and another hill to go over, or the tenderness of a soul that travels under the signs of a destiny that has ups and downs, level elevations and descends, in a repeated, monotonous, endless rhythm. (5)

The evolution of Blagian poetic universe is marked by „the power to change the ontological status of the given real, of converting its elements into images of the paradisiacal or the apollonian, touching not only the esthetic feeling but also the existential one.” (George Gană). Marin Mincu also observes a development of Blagian poetic structures: „This poetic discourse is at the beginning an expressionist cry compressed in vertical visual forms after which it becomes evident the smoothing down of the expressionist combustion in the metaphysical spacial modeling, then followed by the classicization stage when the poet turns to the folklore patterns.” Gheorghe Crăciun also observes the differences that can be established between the Blagian expressionism (within which, contrary to the Western one, the lyric self does not surrender when faced with the phenomenal): „A symbolic subjective individuality that consumes its energies in a kind of static of resigned despair gets to be known, without desiring to change its condition or to leave the spacial and temporal restraints and also generates in all its actions the suspicion that everything is predestined, that the human being is included in an implacable destination that is negative and incomprehensible.” (6)

D. Micu places the Blagian lyric under the sign of the phenomenal stating that “expressionism grows and develops from impressionism: the poet writes down an impression which then amplifies up to the cosmic, until transcendence.” The critic also observes a rhythmic gradation of vision that progressively measures its volutes in a harmoniously articulated poetic universe: frequent in the idea, the real implants in the dream, the image becomes symbol, parable and myth.”

The poem *Eu nu strivesc corola de minuni ale lumii*, which opens Blaga’s debut volume, *Poemele luminii*, offers a primary image, essentialized, of his vision, the way it will develop throughout his entire work. Cristian Moraru observes that the poem is the „confession of the being that defines itself by its availability not to obstruct the Sign in the obstinate search for significances, of not aggressing the forms that refuse, when hastened, to reveal their mysterious contents.” The fundamental equation *-I/universe-* appears as „a double relation of integration, of the fragmentary subjectivity within the confraternities Big Whole and of the world in interiority permeable to the sharpest movements of originary substance and energy” (Ion Pop). In front of the universe seen as a „corolla of wonders”, the poet appears as a purveyor of nocturnal, encompassing „light” that favors identification with the external part of the world and which is radically opposed to „others’ light”-symbol of interrogative consciousness that dismisses mysteries. Between the hypothesis of the integrated Self and the one estranged from the originary realities, Blaga will build an exemplary biography, as part of poetic myth fully connected. This myth is supported, as Ion Pop observes, by the configuration in his poetry of a space that is emblematic, archetypal, a „mythological geography” rooted deeply in the universal imaginary.

Poemele luminii (1919) represents a Dionysian stage in Blaga’s poetic evolution. Mobilized by “tremendous impetuses”, in intimate harmony with the rhythms of a nature in full genesis effervescence, the lyric self expresses in a hyperbolic gesture the will of encompassing, of fusion and assimilation of the entire universe, in a titanic aspiration of over-passing the limits of

individuality. The Dionysian impetus is the one that assembles the poetic images, imposing the fervor of living and feeling.

Friedrich Nietzsche, defining the Dionysian, observes that the self, under the influence of Dionysian impetuses is dynamized by primordial, obscure forces and energies: "Under the Dionysian charm not only the bond between one individual and another is reestablished, but also the estranged, subjugated nature celebrates the reconciliation with its lost son, the man. The Earth gives away its presents, and the beasts from the mountains and deserts approach peacefully." (7). Irrational identity, reservoir of paroxysmal feelings, the "great soul" of the poet imposes the cosmos his own dynamics or it accepts being invaded during the moment of meditative calm by the secret, nocturnal, mysterious move of nature.

Grafted on the poet being, the world urges the poet to reveries where life and death intertwine provoking the departure from the self and invoking a dramatic confrontation of energies. Freed from the classic constraints, the lyric discourse seems to harmonize with the flux of feelings, with the so diversified affective register of the poet. Often, the poetic rhythm receives an aphoristic direction that betrays the still imperfect alloy between the reflexive and imagistic level of poetry. In Lucian Blaga's work there has been recorded the presence of a panpsychism, of a panspiritualism that in the vision Ștefan Aug. Doinaș represents "a kind of pure poetic factionalism according to which the spirit, under several forms, acts as if it were material, and matter transfigures as if it were touched by a kind of grace" (8).

In *Pașii profetului* (1921), although it stays as a "generic cosmos", Blaga's world is set under the sign of Pan deity (deity of nature in germination) gaining in plastic density, in picture relief. The world is now a new Arcadia- a space of sleepy germination, of euphoria, in the middle of a solar nature. In "Bătrân și orb", Pan communicates with the exterior only through the elementary senses, he allows being watered by the "warm drops of dew", touches with voluptuousness the buds and "the soft wool buttons" of lambs; in this Eden space the entire earth is "only wheat cropland and grasshopper song", the being abandoned to the rhythms of being without wishes, reproofs and remorse; only body and only clay."

G. Calinescu comments in this volume from the perspective of a subtle perception, of an unconditioned melting with the phenomenal: "In *Pașii profetului*, in *Zamolxe*, pantheism, or better said panism is fulfilled with the artistic superior means and according to our agrarian condition, in a pastoralism where all the elements of the Virgilian bucolic are to be found: Pan «ovium custos», canicular heat of the fields, the beetles, the sleeping poppies, lizards, pan-pipe, the old trees, the milk that flows, honeycombs, nuts, fruits in general (...). More than a mythological memory, Pan is in the bucolic of Blaga an embodiment of the voluptuousness of participating to all reigns, and especially to detect the little vital movements (...)"

The poetic cycle *Moartea lui Pan* announces the closing of this Eden age and the inauguration of another under "metaphysic sadness." The plenary living unmediated by the real is replaced by the restless aspiration to a spiritual "beyond" almost undecipherable in the signs of the given world. Once with the "shadow of the moon color, of Christ" the problematic man enters the stage, marked by his individual status consciousness and excluded from the initial mundane paradise. Sensorial blindfolding and communicating are followed by the inquiring look, distanced from material things, the work of the disturbing "thought", of the interrogative excess, of rationality.

The poetic self acquires a tragic dimension, due to the rational knowledge, one that establishes in the world the *difference*

The poetic self acquires a tragic dimension due to the rational knowledge, the one that sets the *difference* in the world, suggesting the idea of perishability and of the ephemeral, of the alienation of the human being from its original and essential part, as Dumitru Micu observed: "The tragic destiny is its definition, because Jesus, in Blaga's representation, completely opposed to that of Nietzsche is Luciferic. Conceived under the forbidden tree, his blood is poisoned by the venom introduced by the snake (analogy to the viper bite suffered by Zarathustra in the nietzscheian myth) in the apple that he gave to Eve. In the same apple is hidden the feeling of atonement, that is implicitly of rising to the divine condition: the cross" (9).

This attitude is not from one perspective similar to the "modern nihilism" that Ioan Petru Culianu speaks about. There is also a hard melancholy that confesses the departure of the poetic consciousness from the mundane space, a melancholy that is not far away from the one acknowledged by Nietzsche in a fragment from *Dincolo de bine și de rău*: „How well have we managed to make everything around us clear and free, facile and simple! How we knew to let our senses wonder around the superficial ones, and to inspire our thinking with a divine desire of joyful leaps and false reasoning!- How well we could manage to preserve from the very beginning the ignorance to enjoy a freedom, of lack of worries, of imprudence, of a zeal and of a joy of living almost unbelievable, to be able to enjoy life!" (10).

From now on, especially in the volumes *În marea trecere* (1924) and *Lauda somnului* (1929) Blaga's poetry becomes a heartbreaking lament on the theme of estrangement and split from the cosmic Whole and, at the same time, an evocation of an ideal territory where "nothing desires to be other way than it is" and whose prototype is the Romanian archaic village "placed in the centre of the world" and "cosmic horizon". In the perspective of the problematic self, the word appears as a "falling apart paradise" mined by a "nameless disease", threatened by downfall and death. In these creations obscure forces disturb the primary order of the cosmos, the landscape becomes hallucinating and the beings seem subjected to a strange fascination of the depth, of the impenetrable, of the mythic mystery: "pătrunse de duh / fețele-și lungesc ceara / și nimeni nu mai caută vindecare" sau "pretutindeni e o tristețe. E o negare. E un sfârșit." Sleep is for Blaga a symbolic archetype that presupposes the split of the Self from the diurnal universe and from the conceptualization of the rational consciousness and the reunification within the paradigmatic space of essences of the original status, as Mircea Vaida also observes: "The monad of sleep is according to Blaga a remembrance, a return to the archetypes, a self-knowledge of the spirit according to the Hegelian definition of history (11).

Blagian's sleep, even though unfolds under a nocturnal register, it is not one from the a profound regime, because, as Gaston Bachelard observes, "the nocturnal dream is not ours. It is not our property. For us, it is a kidnapper, one of the most disconcerting kidnappers: it kidnaps our being. Nights have no history. They do not connect one to the other. " (12). One can state that Blagian sleep belongs primarily to the category of reverie. The distinction between reverie and the nocturnal sleep is operated with convincing illustrations and arguments by Bachelard: "the essential difference between the nocturnal sleep and reverie, a difference that belongs to the phenomenology: while the dreamer of nocturnal dream is a shadow that has lost his Self, the reverie dreamer, if he is more or less a philosopher, can formulate a *cogito* in the centre of his dreaming Self." (13)

Marin Micu states that in the volume *Lauda somnului* „, a new side of the poet's art emerges, namely the space vision, the premeditated placement out of duration. The poet truly becomes an *expressionist artist*, a thing that is evident in the titles of his poems, most of which having themes

that could be considered very well as belonging to the expressionist art: «Holy Bird» (sculptural theme declared in the poem dedication), «Old City», «Sunset», «Bent Head» (expressionist art detail), «Perspective», «Past landscape», «In the mountains» etc.” (14).

Noticing the way in which in the volumes *La curțile dorului* or in *Nebănuitele trepte*, for example, the Blagian expressionism becomes autochthonous, being impregnated with musical accents and thrilling of the Mioritic space, Marin Mincu observes that “the form becomes content, and the content justifies formally by itself, namely it is « melt within the form »; this way the work appears to be exactly what it is and not something else (it does not resort to allegories or to other procedures of symbolization, it does not want to express something else but itself as presence of a content). (The expressionist musicality is thus fundamentally different from the meaning of the symbolist imperative: «De la musique avant toute chose!»). The content of the expressionist work intends to transgress any dealings with the form and to display as being nude.” (15).

The feeling of guilt becomes even more overwhelming as the poet “mysteries murderer” feels that the source of this split is in his own interior universe: “vieții nu i-am rămas dator nici / un gând / dar i-am rămas dator viața toată”. The image of a world set in its ancient patterns will represent for the poet a continuous “reproach” and an urge as well to return to the “village soul”. “in the circle of the same hearth”. Blaga re-actualizes here the traditional theme of the “uprooting”, frequent in the Transylvanian poetry (Iosif, Goga), but conferring this topos metaphysical dimensions because his estrangement surpasses the historically conditioned reality, imposing itself as a reason of a meditation with much larger ontological implications.

Blaga’s love poetry is grave, its main forms being hymn and elegy, praise and lament. The lyric lament of the poet is caused by the loss of love that is equivalent to the estrangement from absolute, or with its too late re-encounter when the soul is overwhelmed by the sadness of the great passage. Even when it is not actually elegiac, the erotic poetry of Blaga has a pathetic note that reveals the melancholic character of the poet. This is because melancholy is with Blaga a structural given element, as it is the capacity to perceive the being and to participate to it by contemplation. Blaga’s poetry has as a background a diffuse state of restlessness and sadness that forms the substance of the lament. The most profound substance of this poetry resides in the feeling of cosmic solitude, of non-communication with the absolute vital foundation of the universe. This is Blaga’s “metaphysical sadness” that materializes in the motifs of “sickness” and “wound.”

In Blaga’s creation there is a permanent tension between the vanity of the one that looks for the mysteries of the world and the humility of the Self- abandonment in front of the reality. This tension is solved in an exemplary way through the modalities by which the poetic spirit assimilates the natural world, of history, of culture and transforms it in expression and organizes it according to a new significance. As many modern poets, at first sight, Blaga does not seem to pay any kind of attention to the form or the lyric expression. However, gradually his lyric discourse is more and more constrained by rigor, the language clarifies and simplifies, to finally be on the level of total structuring, a language of a classic type, clear and essential with clear sounds and representations of a total formal balance. Lucian Blaga’s poetry configures an ethereal and harmonious cosmos that reflects his inner being, grave and of an exemplary serenity, sometimes problematic, by assuming a dimension of the revealing tragic.

The posthumous poems have a distinct character from those published during the poet’s life by their vision and style. Cornel Moraru makes a net distinction between the two categories

of the lyric forms: “Called ‘poet of the light’ (reference is made to the first volumes of verses), Blaga puts on the coat of a telluric poet in the posthumous volumes. One can actually notice a departure from the primordial element, the air (symbol of masculinity) to the element of earth (maternal symbol), a departure from animus followed by a coming to anima. Son of earth, the Self initiates in the mysteries of this universe, which is perceived as a matrix, protective space. Placed in the centre of the “corolla of world’s wonders” (egocentrism specific to expressionism), the Self refers to the cosmic to illustrate the ontological value of its movements with initiating meaning. This imaginary space has at its basis the soul of the one inscribed in the world of the diurnal dreaming.”

Cornel Moraru, the author of a monographic work about Blaga where the accents between poetry and philosophy are well oriented, considers that “through imagination a world parallel to the real one is created and the creating subject integrates the world within the secured space of reverie, of a dreaming and valuing loneliness on the level of the creative psychism. The world of diurnal dreaming places the Self on a level that eludes transformation, where the soul is revealed in its entire plenitude of creative state. Thus, the language used by the poets becomes synonymous to the souls’ language and poetry includes both the poet and his world.”

In the case of Lucian Blaga, the poetic word is born out of mythical virtual forms of silence, a fact observed by Nicolae Balota as well: “Speaking about the passion of the word and confessing myself as a man of word, I remembered the face of a great taciturn, of a poet and thinker that had a real call of silence. Lucian Blaga- because he is the one I am speaking about- always suspected rhetoric of being a “hollow art”. In one of his late poems, when evoking Ulysses, he could not imagine him according to his Hellenic representation as a hero with a flowered speech, but a grave man, enjoying silence: «Deșartă născocire/ e vorba ce țese.»” (16).

The poetic vision incorporates a stance of the telluric elementary, acquiring chthonian iridescent hues, a fact also observed by Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu: “Blagian thirst of achieving the unlimited is manifested in the interiority of things as Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu notices, comparing Blaga with Novalis and Eminescu; at the same time the critic notes the difference between the love poems published during his life and the posthumous ones:”the angelic character of love is not here the result of puritan idealization of the erotic feeling, or of his abstractization dictated by the vision of the expressionist artist. The dematerializations, the incandescence belong to human condition. Particular, presented with a touching sincerity[...]” (17).

The evolution of Blagian lyrism has, as observed by Cornel Moraru, the form of an initiating way for re-finding the matrix spiritual essence: “All three infrahuman levels, telluric (anima) lower the being then to rise it by accumulating the powers inferior to the man from the rational point of view but superior to him on the physic level. Thus, knowing the universe mysteries, the Self puts on the coat of the initial, of Ulysses returned home from his long journey. Returned to his matrix space, the mind and the heart of the lyric hero can reconstruct the realm of childhood (...) symbolized by the image of the spring that the traveler re-encounters upon his return to the village (...). Thus, the empiric Self values his experience through the representation of the route from childhood to maturity (love). His way is an ascending one, of initiation, re-lived through the unlimited power of memory and textualized through imagination. It is a reliving in anima because it is made in the reverie of the thinker that acknowledges his affiliation to earth, mother of all beings (vegetation, animals) that live in this space under the sign of becoming. Through reverie, the Self gets to know the depth of his own being, the removal from time, the

silence that bonds him to his world; he thus gets the philosophers' stone of alchemists, metaphorically speaking."

On the other hand the Blagian poetic myth is viewed by the critic Ion Pop also from the perspective of evolution, of the metamorphoses of style the Blagian lyric underwent over time: "Analyzing the articulations of the Blagian poetic myth we could notice that starting with *Moartea lui Pan*, a substantial change of vision takes place, which is equivalent on the level of poetry with what the philosopher Blaga names "ontological rupture." The moment is not left without consequences on the level of the lyric discourse "definition"; we can even say that from now on the problem of such a "definition" can really be considered. It is only through the symbolic death of Pan that the rupture between "sign" and "meaning" can take place and this is felt by the disaggregation times of the mythical "golden age", a rupture that represents a serious deterioration of the magic perspective on the language. Through Pan's and Arcadian universe's disappearance, the 'song' of elementary is interrupted (...). The estranged Blagian man, only in the possession of the "word" will feel in a situation two times precarious, in relation to the two great landmarks, of the yet-unuttered and of the complete uttered. The word will equally reveal itself as betraying the indivisible basis of the original silence and as a capacity of acceding to totality. From here, either the refusal of speech, the ostentatious display of the mute mask, or the aspiration difficult to achieve to get into the possession of the word able to defeat time and the mortal limits (...)" (18).

The topos of light and Blagian poetic myth

Lucian Blaga's poetry met over time several avatars, a certain evolution of the poetic formulas and vision. From the Dionysian ecstasy from the beginning with the thirst of limitlessness and the wish to melt with the universe, to the self-reconciliation and the Apollonian serenity from the last cycles of verses, the Blagian lyric did not stop to continuously search for itself, in its structures and attitudes. In the Blagian poetic mythology the *light* is a privileged topos, around which the other thematic constellations get together.

The founding light, the light that reveals the truths of the world and of the being, the light of love that which installs in the regime of being the miracle of communion and harmony- all these significances of the theme of light are to be found throughout the Blagian creation, in diverse modulations and models, sometimes in a non-debatable conjunction with the poetic myth of creation, of the creation of the world in and through the word. Actually, light, word, silence is to be found together in a symbolic unity that relates to Orphism, a coherent and tensioned unity that is noticed, among others by Nicolae Balota: "Thirst of light-escape from light, thirst of silence, aspiration to the word, ambivalent tendencies represented by the tide, flux and reflux of this poetic universe (...). This territory is a continent of sensibility, of the *soul*, of the psychic space.

Blaga is the poet of *anima* in an eternal anguish, in a continuous effort of self-revealing and self-surpassing. Of course that by *anima* we don't mean only the domain of subjective feelings of the poet but that of experiences that surpass this subjectivity. Lucian Blaga is not the poet of existential adventures but of essential experiences. We intend hereby to follow the metamorphoses of this topos, the *light* in several poems representatives for such a lyric representation: *Eu nu strivesc corola de minuni a lumii*, *Lumina raiului* and *Biografie*. The poem *Eu nu strivesc corola de minuni a lumii*, first appeared in the newspaper "Glasul Bucovinei", no.3/16 January

1919 and was included in the volume *Poemele Luminii* from the same year. The poem can be approached both from an exclusive esthetic perspective, but also from the perspective of its value as *ars poetica*, to the extent to which the poet incorporates in its verses an entire conception of the world, of art, of the role and the finalities of poetic knowledge in conjunction with the mechanisms of the rational knowledge.

Revealing for the interpretation of this poem is an essay later published, entitled *Cunoastere Luciferica* where Blaga refers to the instruments and the roles of human knowledge. The philosopher believes that he could circumscribe *paradisiacal knowledge* – logic, rational, founded on reasoning and axioms that proposes to reveal, to explain and to name the mystery and *luciferian knowledge*, based on ecstatic intellect, knowledge that aims not at lowering but potentiating the mysteries of the world.

The literary critic Mircea Martin reveals the semantic and metaphysical elements of this first volume, realizing that in a simpler, more naïve less adequate way- and as such more obvious- , Blaga confesses in the poems from the beginning a fundamental tendency of his creative – that of looking in the life forms in the nature's embodiments, a principle, and if possible, an origin point, a generating centre (...). In any case, even from the first volume, one can notice the effort of departing the contingent as well as the organic (and programming) prone to the mysteries of a cosmic existence where life itself and life as such are not events but phenomena in a series. The contemplation of the world “wonders” is actually a foreseeing of the essence of life plenary manifested in the time and space of “wonder.” The privilege belongs exclusively to poetry (...). *Poemele luminii* reveal to us as a programmatic volume not only through a title or another, or through the more explicit character of the poet's intentions, but also through his wholeness because by relating to the entirety of the work he reveals a certain prospective significance. As we have said, the poet circumscribes here the themes and “reserves” them as if for an ulterior consolidation that will change or secure one or another feature. Through the precocity and the abundance of poetic arts, through the work's arrangement and the structure of the lyrism itself, Blaga reveals as a poet anticipated by a program. Thus, not in the respect of following as such from one title to another, or from one verse to another of some intentions or preliminary ideas, but in respect to the capacity that he proves in watching his work from above, in directing it through a global projective thinking (...)” (19).

Blaga confesses his adherence to an intuitive knowledge, poetic, luciferian, knowledge that emphatically embraces the existence depths without trying to disassemble the mechanisms through rationality. A certain emphatic attitude, of affective understanding can be recovered also in some aphorisms of the author of *Poemele luminii* , revealing for his conception: “Sometimes our duty in front of a true mystery is not to reveal it but to get it as deep as to transform it into a greater mystery.” In another aphorism Blaga nuances and develops his gnoseologic position:

Over centuries philosophers have hoped to finally discover the world mysteries. Today philosophers no longer believe it and they complain about their incapability. However I am glad that I do not know and I cannot know what I am and the things around me, because only this way *I can project in the mystery of the world a meaning*, an importance and values that spring from the most intimate necessities of life and of my sole. Man must be a creator, - that is why I joyfully give up on absolute knowledge.”

Evidently, *Eu nu strivesc corola de minuni a lumii* is not a simple illustration of such as conception. Structurally, Blaga's poetry has several series. The first one reveals the relation between the lyric Self and the universe, from the perspective of the world knowledge. It is very

eloquent the use of the 1st person personal pronoun, of the verbs in the present Indicative, of the possessive adjectives- all these grammatical, stylistic modalities having the role of stressing the central idea of the poetry, that of the poet's adherence to the luciferian, intuitive, participative knowledge.

The metaphor "corolla of world's wonders" defines the synthetic and symbolic representation of the universe mysteries, particularized by "flowers", "eyes", "lips" and "graves"- by which Blaga suggests the essential elements of the existence: love, spirituality, logos, nothingness: "Eu nu strivesc corola de minuni a lumii/ și nu ucid/ cu mintea tainele, ce lentâlnesc/ în calea mea/ în flori, în ochi, pe buze ori morminte". The second scene of the poem faces us with the condition of others, thus of those that adhere to a rational knowledge and who want to reveal the mysteries of the universe by a logic attempt. ("Lumina altora/ sugrumă vraja nepătrunsului ascuns/ în adâncimi de întuneric"). Following this, in a third moment of the poem, the poet deepens his opposition to the *others' light* by projecting in the myth, through a metaphorical comparison, his own gnoseologic conception: "dar eu,/ eu cu lumina mea sporesc a lumii taină -/ și-ntocmai cum cu razele ei albe luna/ nu micșorează, ci tremurătoare/ mărește și mai tare taina nopții,/ așa îmbogățesc și eu întunecata zare/ cu largi fiori de sfânt mister,/ și tot ce-i ne-nțeles/ se schimbă-n ne-nțelesuri și mai mari/ sub ochii mei". The last scene of the poem brings about the motivation, argumentation of the Blagian poetic creed through love, an essential way of being into mystery and absolute of the man, a feeling of emphatic communion and of revealing the world's mysteries in a sympathetic way ("căci eu iubesc/ și flori și ochi și buze și morminte"). The poetic light that Blaga chooses is the one that „assures, on the contrary, the coexistence of the diverse in One, covering the dividing lines between beings and things, thus engaging the feeling of being part of the existential mystery” (Ion Pop).

This poem with a programmatic character presents Blaga as a poet of the nocturnal regime of the imaginary and of knowledge, a poet that prefers the diffuse, protective light of the moon to the total clearness of solarly. The poetry also displays a thorough coherence conferred by its bipolar construction, on two axes of significances, according to the two levels of knowledge, symbolically and antithetically represented by "my light" and "others' light." Through its all representations the poem *Eu nu strivesc corola de minuni a lumii* faces us with a problematizing, phenomenal, interrogative and antithetic Self that conceives the knowledge of the world's mysteries as an emphatic communion between the intuitive conscience and universe's mysteries.

Another revealing poem for the topos of the *light is The Light*, important creation for the stance of the Blagian Orphism, but also for this thirst of essentiality that was mentioned among others by Nicolae Balota. The poem includes three different lyric sequences. If in the first one and in the last stanza we have a monologue addressed to the loved, the second and the third suggestively create a cosmogonist picture, while the forth stanza includes a rhetoric interrogation ("Dar unde-a pierit orbitoarea/ lumina de-atunci – cine știe"?). In his poem Blaga assigns the Eros a cosmogonist meaning, one of world's creation, of configuring cosmos. Light is here in conjunction with love, they are two entities that lead to the creation of the celestial harmony, but which incorporate the storm of the affective feeling so characteristic to the human world.

The primordial light is actually synonymous to the attraction of love, that which bonds things together and ascribes them an irrepressible ontological coherence: "Lumina ce-o simt/ năvălindu-mi în piept când te văd/ oare nu e un strop din lumina/ creată în ziua dintâi,/ din lumina aceea-nsetată adânc de viață?// Nimicul zăcea-n agonie,/ când singur plutea-n întuneric și

dat-a/ un semn Nepătrunsul: «Să fie lumină»./ O mare și-un vifor nebun de lumină/ făcutu-s-a-n clipă:/ o sete era de păcate, de doruri, de-avânturi, de patimi,/ o sete de lume și soare”.

The voluptuousness of light and of creative love has similarities with the cosmic projections of the Eros from Eminescu's creation. From the cosmogonist picture the poet returns to the individualization of the eternal feminine placed in conjunction with the force of light and love to plasticize beauty: “Lumina ce-o simt năvălindu-mi/ în piept când te văd – minunato,/ e poate ultimul strop/ din lumina creată în ziua dintâi.” The Eros feeling is loaded in this major creation of Blaga with orphic meanings: light, as well as poetry, is the creation, structuring of possible worlds, a reencounter of the primordial order, of the archetypal harmony of the being.

Lumina raiului is a poem that brings onto the stage a pantheist and dichotomous vision of existence. The poet finds that the world is the product of a mixture of good and bad, of light and darkness, the same way in the human being the voluptuousness of sin and the mystery beauty get harmonized. Resorting to some significances of the bogomilic vision according to which world's creation was presided not only by God but also by Satan, an idea that is valued also in *Mesterul Manole*, Blagian lyric vision is also inspired from the Nietzsche's *will of power*. The lyric self feels acutely the need of limitlessness; it is covered by an orgiastic, Dionysian feeling of melting with the Big Whole, with the world's limits.

The euphoria of senses is conjugated with the voluptuousness of the beautiful. Heaven and hell feed each other their energies and potentialities: “Spre soare râd!/ Eu nu-mi am inima în cap,/ nici creieri n-am în inimă./ Sunt beat de lume și-s păgân!/ Dar oare ar rodi-n ogorul meu/ atâta răs fără de căldura răului?/ Și-ar înflori pe buza ta atâta vrajă,/ de n-ai fi frământată,/ Sfânto,/ de voluptatea-ascunsă a păcatului?/ Ca un eretic stau pe gânduri și mă-ntreb:/ De unde-și are raiul/ lumina? – Știu: îl luminează iadul/ cu flăcările lui!”.

The second sequence of the poetic text deepens the need of body limitlessness of the poet, his aspiration of encompassing the entire universe with his consciousness through the maximum dilated senses. Love, for instance is a feeling of cosmic grandeur where the will of the poet is exacerbated at maximum in a tendency to re-find the supreme communion *Me/ Universe*, and the sensitive capacity is enormous (“Când aş iubi,/ mi-aş întinde spre cer toate mărele/ ca nişte vâjnoase, sălbaticе braţe fierbinţi,/ spre cer/ să-l cuprind,/ mijlocul să-i frâng,/ să-i sărut sclipitoarele stele”). Poem of contraries that make up existence, of antinomies that feed human soul *Lumina Raiului* is representative for Blaga's sensitive-exalting lyric, one where the enormous sensations, the limitless, feelings are emblematic for his poetic vision.

Light as creation, as emergence in the space of being is imagined in *Biografie*. Included in the volume *Lauda Somnului* in 1929, the poem *Biografie* had several forms. The oldest one was entitled *Biografia mea pentru un prieten* and was published in „Gândirea” journal in 1925. The poet is also here tempted by his self-defining through the poetry, he is lured by his self-portrait, an interior one, one that cannot render the data of the external being but rather the imponderable ones, those of mystery and dream being. *Biografie* begins with a circumscribing of the mundane space and of the prickly question regarding his own origin.

World is for Blaga singing, dreaming, impenetrable mystery, an orphic secret and dream. Actually, in Blagian lyric the *Self* and the *World* are as Ion Pop mentions “two poles between which a perpetual tension is to develop, a restless tendency of approaching up to identification, two poles of which the most threatened one (but also threatening) is the first- because if the world is presented from the beginning as a completely constituted ensemble, subjected to a

superior order, not the same thing can be said about the human subject oscillating between possibilities of contradictory option meant to clarify or to baffle the image about the universe.“

Therefore the confession lyric discourse sees the world as a delight just because its geometry is harmonious, while the Self is in search of its original mystery, “enchanted” or “fulfilled” by its unspoken beauties or by the order that can be guessed in the fragile composition of the elements. Birth is synonymous to an “appearance” in the light: “Unde și când m-am ivit în lumină, nu știu,/ din umbră mă ispitesc singur să cred/ că lumea e o cântare./ Străin zâmbind, vrăjit suind,/ în mijlocul ei mă-mplinesc cu mirare./ Câteodată spun vorbe cari nu mă cuprind,/ câteodată iubesc lucruri cari nu-mi răspund./ De vânturi și isprăvi visate îmi sunt ochii plini,/ de umblat umblu ca fiecare:/ când vinovat pe coperișele iadului,/ când fără păcat pe muntele cu crini”.

Poet’s existence does not develop only in the diurnal regime of the imaginary, only in the space of a total solarity. On the contrary, it consumes within the „circle of the same hearth”, in a mythical and a-temporal space, where the seen and the unseen communicate, where the living ones share mysteries with the ancestors and the poet fully lives the ecstasy of the song and listens with piety the „stories of the blood” from ancestral times. Such an existence resembles a dismantling in the limitless space, a fusion with the originality, with the essential silence of the origins (“Închis în cercul aceleiași vetre/ fac schimb de taine cu strămoșii,/ norodul spălat de ape subț pietre./ Seara se-ntâmplă mulcom s-ascult/ în mine cum se tot revarsă/ poveștile sângelui uitat de mult./ Binecuvânt pâinea și luna./ Ziua trăiesc împrăștiat cu furtuna”).

The motif of the song appears with new accents at the end of the poem. For Blaga, the song is a prolongation in the world of the created, of the original silence meaning that it there that one finds the equilibrium and the harmony that characterize the state of pure pre-verbal virtuosity and not only: through the song, the word’s condition, as name of the estranged fragment, is surpassed in the hymnic Whole the same way the “corolla of world’s wonders” represents a round ensemble that lives through its reunited parts.” The authenticity of the confession travestied in verse is revealed from the re-embodiment of the poet’s being in the incantation valences of the “song”, one that seeks to reveal the entire greatness and deepness of the universe, as well as the “great passage.” It is a dim song that gets closer to silence, with agonistic words, a melancholic and ineffable song, with tunes more and more subjected to an essential silence: “Cu cuvinte stinse în gură/ am cântat și mai cânt marea trecere,/ somnul lumii, îngerii de ceară./ De pe-un umăr pe altul/ tăcând îmi trec steaua ca o povară.”

Interior biography that transcribes the essences of the Blagian soul, the poem has the resonances of an non-faked confession, where the most profound feelings of the Self are to be found. In Blaga’s poem the light topos is, as we have seen, a privileged one through the metaphorical and symbolical character that is ascribed to it but also through the multiplicity of meanings that it masters in its multivalent structure. Light and word, the poetic myth and silence represent essential themes of Blagian lyric universe, intertwined in a defining, fundamental symbolic constellation.

Stances of word and and silence in Lucian Blaga’s poetry

In the vision of the poet from Lancram, the word represents a form of devalued communication that is based on ostentation, on non-hiding, therefore, a totally limited value in the attempt to decipher the mysteries of the universe, to express an ultimate, essential, un-

analyzable reality. If in its sound reality the word distorts the authentic meaning of the things, silence is the modality by which the essence of the real can be transcribed thus surpassing the crisis of human communication. In a book published in 2003 *Chipuri tăcute ale veșniciei în lirica lui Blaga*, V. Fanache analyzes the main conceptual configurations of a „poetics of silence” connected to the „silent expressionism” and in the perspective of a mimetic art, lacking visionary expansion. The new style that Blaga turns into theory produces a mutation from one accessory to the essential, from concrete to abstract, from immediate to transcendent, from word to silence.”

Marin Mincu perceives Lucian Blaga’s poetry from the perspective of the metamorphoses and semantic, metaphysical and expressive avatars that he assumed: Beyond the data of the intellectual biography, *Poemele luminii* include in *nuce* all the elements of the expressionist program: the feeling of the absolute, the vitalist history, nietzscheean exacerbation of the creative Self, the authentic revival of the primitive mythic background, the interiorization and the spiritualization of the scenery, the maximum visionary tension etc. The attitudes and the images of Blagian poetry are initially expressionist (...). Although *Poemele luminii* take over expressionist elements, they manage to suggest only the persistent aspiration of the matter towards an absolute cosmic embodiment; the existential and the human appear only as a way of manifestation for the abstract phenomenal. The city with all its expressionist frights, a recurrent motif at Georg Trakl or at Gottfried Benn, is not yet an actual element of the imaginary universe at Blaga; it is as the village, a concept that is inhabited by other concepts and is not populated by living beings yet (...). In *Pașii profetului* one can already feel a change of the tone and attitude, thus, the phenomenal Self gradually disappears from the front scene of the poem and is replaced by an „anonymous” entity-Pan deity. Of course that from this perspective one can interpret the matter of the first volume also as an attempt of the expressionist anonymity towards cosmic re-integration. But, the second volume marks a calming of the primary energies, pushed to the hysteria of the cry in *Poemele luminii*; now we do not assist to that stoned thrill of ecstatic silence, but to the “process of relaxation” that is accomplished as the act of reading advances; we no longer see the matter in Van Gogh-like flames, but we feel the smolder under the summer ash, the underground bustle of metamorphoses that start to transform the silence of the archetypal forms in as many problems open to new questions (...). Having started from the expressionist ground, Blaga adds the metaphysical wings that no European expressionist poet had worn before; in his high, theoretical and practical exemplarity the Romanian poet will fulfill what we can call the “Blagianization of expressionism.” This is made by the complete departure from the real; the poet makes an imaginary universe where the expressionist motifs and figures can still be perceived as some hidden magnets and around which a palpable matter has collected, but one of a “Blagian” identity that has the function to cover and obscure the initial matter. This poem no longer had the initial incandescence but irradiates a metaphysic tension (...). In the third stage of the Blagian discourse the *utterance structure* appears (...). In this last evolution the Blagian poetry finally surfaces on the level of the Blagian discourse without requiring rhythm, rhyme, and other traditional prosodic elements, even overusing them by resorting to folklore models. The themes of the poetry get autochthonous in a programmatic manner. The self is not either phenomenal or anonymous but problematized and one almost *domesticated* that returns to the intimate and patriarchal joys of life.” (20)

Regarding the postulate of the mystery as an essential dominant trait of Blaga’s lyrics, the poetics of the silence is associated to the shadow and to sleep. As V. Fanache observes, silence is “similar to the non-created and to death, it is secret and, above all, it reveals itself as mystery. The

mystery is the metaphor concept which lies at the foundation of Blaga's philosophy and esthetics. The equivalent of mystery in poetry is the silence. Mystery, alongside with silence, represent the 'live metaphor' of Blaga's creation in all its compartments, philosophy, theater, poetry".

The frequency and the overwhelming importance of silence, in all its forms of poetic manifestation, is of foremost position, as V. Fanache observes: "the devaluation of the word and its replacement with the objective 'being' of the world, with the silent face of things, living and secrets as well as with everything connected to the refusal of utterance to the benefit of fertile internalization promote an esthetics of the silence, which Blaga illustrates at the complex level of an innovator, joining other great creators. The option for the art of silence is sustained by Blaga with an out-of-ordinary doctrinaire pathos emerged from the conviction that the way of poetry has stopped being the way of the word exclusively; the image of the universe and of the human being in their objective manifestation – which are images in themselves, hard to explain logically, and purely poetical – seem to be more revealing than the descriptive effort or that of knowledge".

By repudiating the word, as a rationalized modality which is insufficient to decipher existential mysteries, Blaga seeks to reveal the eternal landmarks of the universe, the "faces of immortality" which can only be fragmentarily reflected by the verb. As V. Fanache points out, the faces of immortality have undisputable ontic reality: "By acknowledging them, one also acknowledges their objective presence, they are not a product of words, but products of the universe existent prior and post man's passage through the world. They are not perennial. We do not know precisely who and what these faces are, but we live together with them, we are aware of their identity and contaminated by their emerging substance ('my light') without being able to influence them in any way. We are addicted to these faces, crossed and left by them in complete secret. The silent faces of immortality cannot be considered fictions".

Ion Pop also considers that "Blaga's alienated man whose only belonging is 'the word' will find himself in a situation twice as precarious compared to the two great landmarks, that of the yet to be spoken and that of the fully spoken. For the word will appear to him both as a betrayal of the indivisible background of the primordial silence and as incapacity to accede to totality. Hence is the refusal of speaking, the ostentatious display of the mute mask or the not easily accomplished task of appropriating the word which should be capable of conquering time and the limits of mortality (...)".

The dialogue of the human being with divinity is instituted in the poem *Psalm*. In fact, the relationship between I and transcendence is a privileged theme of Blaga's poetry. It is a relationship based on a metaphysical feeling of existence, a feeling which is acutely sensitive to mystery and myth. The poet even traces down a sort of genealogy of the religious feeling, one which combines the joy and trust in the divine force characterizing childhood with the sadness which accompanies the awareness of the world degradation, of universal decline and of deserting the meanings of sacrality.

The poet's loneliness has as a corollary the solitude of the divine being, represented as *deus absconditus*, a divinity which, after having created the universe via a demiurgic act, hides itself in an unknown place, oblivious of its creatures' claims. The significance of the godly claustration in a 'locked up' sky escapes the poet and is very close to Arghezi's lyrical attitudes in "Psalms".

The lack of the dialogue I / God, the incapacity of authentic faith, the absence of genuine potentialities to decipher the signs of the world lead to a feeling of acute metaphysical sadness, of agonic life in a disintegrated space, characterized by the dissolution of sacral significances: "O

durere totdeauna mi-a fost singurătatea ta ascunsă/ Dumnezeu, dar ce era să fac?/ Când eram copil mă jucam cu tine/ și-n închipuire te desfăceam cum desfaci o jucărie./ Apoi, sălbăticia mi-a crescut,/ cântările mi-au pierit,/ și fără să-mi fi fost vreodată aproape/ te-am pierdut pentru totdeauna/ în țărână, în foc, în văzduh și pe ape./ Între răsăritul de soare și-apusul de soare/ sunt numai tină și rană./ În cer te-ai închis ca-ntr-un coșciug./ O, de n-ai fi mai înrudit cu moartea/ decât cu viața,/ mi-ai vorbi, de-acolo unde ești,/ din pământ ori din poveste mi-ai vorbi”.

In the poet's assumption, God is “non-moving identity”, complete purity which does not reveal itself to people, which does not expect anything, which delays its hierophany and constantly hides from the regard of the insignificant, of the ones born of dust (“În spinii de-aci arată-te, Doamne,/ să știu ce aștepti de la mine./ Să prind din văzduh sulița veninoasă/ din adânc azvârlită de altul să te rănească sub aripi?/ Ori nu dorești nimic?/ Ești mută, neclintită identitate/ (rotunjit în sine a este a)./ Nu ceri nimic. Nici măcar rugăciunea mea”).

Towards the end of the poem, the poet's interrogations turn into sadness, the lyrical I falls into the night, but so does the poet's own soul, falling into an apocalyptic night of nightmare and ashes, when the voice of the psalmist has resonances of despair, of the agony of hope: “Iată stelele întră în lume/ deodată cu întrebătoarele mele tristeți:/ Iată e noapte fără ferestre-n afară./ Dumnezeu, de-acum ce mă fac?/ În mijlocul tău mă dezbrac. Mă dezbrac de trup/ ca de- haină pe care-o lași în drum”. “Taking one's body off” has the connotations of renouncing his own identity and also renouncing the communion of the I with the Totality of the universe, in an attempt to rediscover the essential reasons of his own being.

The poem *Paradis în destrămare* appeared in the volume *Lauda somnului* in 1929. the theme of the poem is that of the rupture of the paradisiacal state, being taken from the *Genesis*: “So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life”. In *Paradis în destrămare* the fundamental motive is connected to the aspiration to the absolute, fundamental existence, for the essential verb of Blaga's lyrics: *to be*. The loss of the feeling of belonging to the cosmic space acquires in this poem the dimensions of the great passage, the thrill of death has apocalyptic proportions and so has the loss of faith.

Thus, the keeper of the Paradise keeps the bottom of a flameless sword in his hands and, although he does not fight with anyone, he feels defeated. The archangels plough the land with wooden ploughs and complain about the weight of their wings – metaphor which represents the flight downwards, the fall, the dissolution of the myth, the escapeless extinction. The Dove of the Holy Spirit flies through the neighboring clouds, putting the last lights down with its beak. This suggests the maximal dimension of the loss of human balance, because in the biblical faith, this balance has a redeeming and generative role .

The troubling image of the fall of Paradise reaches a climax in the final seven lines of the poem. The final metaphor suggests the thrill of death, which is accentuated by the syntagms “Vai mie, vai ție”. The poem closes within itself a metaphor of death – the death of the spirit and the death of the body – in accordance with the suggestive, dramatic image of the fall of Paradise.

The poem *Paradis în destrămare* faces us with an ontological and gnoseological rupture, mirrored in a gradual decay of the sacred and its transfer to the realms of the profane. It is not accidental that Marin Mincu spoke of a progressive rupture of the being, of its “rupture in descendent steps, which can be followed in the descending gradation of the symbols of the poem: the winged keeper, the seraphims, the archangels, the dove, naked angels, spiders, dust, body”.

From the images which suggest ascent, flight, the need to ascend in spiritual order, the poet passes to the images of decline, of degradation or to those of the inexorable extinction “Portarul înaripat mai ține întins/ un cotor de spadă fără de flăcări./ Nu se luptă cu nimeni,/ dar se simte învins./ Pretutindeni pe pajiști și pe ogor/ serafimi cu părul nins/ însetează după adevăr,/ dar apele din fântâni/ refuză gălețile lor./ Arând fără îndemn/ cu pluguri de lemn,/ arhanghelii se plâng/ de greutatea aripelor./ Trece printre sori vecini/ porumbelul sfântului duh,/ cu pliscul stinge cele din urmă lumini”.

In *Paradis în destrămare* the poet conjugates, in a bachelardian lecture, the earthly imaginary (pastures, field) and the aquatic one - which has become scarce - (“apele din fântâni”) thus suggesting the sterility, the aridity of the landscape. In other words, we have a configuration of the geography of the anti-myth, of the “reversed” myth, which has the individual correspondent of a feeling of uprootedness that the being may feel and that of the ontological decline, produced on the background of the retrieval of the divine in inaccessible spheres.

Blaga’s text is undoubtedly an allegory of the condition of the modern man, of the modern time, a time of rupture and negation, of regression and sterile necessity, in which the alienation of the being is more and more acute, fact which was also observed by Ion Pop: “«paradisul în destrămare» now means the fall of the alienated human being, deeply troubled by the passion of searching for ‘truths’, of answers who fail to come”. The last part of the poem marks an accentuation of the tragic and elegiac tonality which accompanies the feeling of ontological degradation and fragility of human condition. The fallen paradise has an earthly texture, spirituality takes on the weight of the dust, “apa vie” loses its miraculous power (“Noaptea îngerii goi/ zgribulind se culcă în fân:/ vai mie, vai ție,/ păianjeni mulți au umplut apa vie,/ odată vor putrezi și îngerii sub glie,/ țărâna va seca poveștile/ din trupul trist”.

From a prosodiocal perspective, the poem is written in free verse, with a varied rhythmical modulation and with an elegiac musicality, which transposes in the most eloquent way the feeling of alienation and slow agony of the being in a fallen heaven.

Lucian Blaga and the lyrical representations of the eros

Sensoriality is perceived by E. Lovinescu as the primordial, archetypal element of Lucian Blaga’s poems, and the critic of the “Sburatorul” magazine somehow places in a corner of shadow those poems charged with undeniable metaphysical value which confer the author of “Poemele luminii” his originality: “Violent modernist, and even expressionist in his dramas, Lucian Blaga is not only an anti-symbolist but, as we shall see, an anti-lyricist. We shall not insist upon his Germanized oriental influence, but we shall stop to the anti-symbolist reaction which he represents (...). Mr. Blaga’s poetry represents a descent into the subconscious; it doesn’t emerge from any deep emotion, but from the superficial region of the sensation, or from the realms of reason. The states of the soul are therefore decomposed into disparate sentiments, out of the continuation of the pulverization process, feelings are decomposed, at their turn, into sensations (...). So, sensorialism replaces lyricism; out of the free contact of the senses with nature we find in Mr. Blaga’s poetry not only an impression of freshness, but also a sort of joy for living, an optimism and even an apparent frenzy, in a short breath which limits itself to sensation or which finds support on purely intellectual considerations (21).

On the other hand, one may argue that the hyperbolic energitism and interiorization are the two attitudes which Blaga assumes with equal fervor, fact which was also observed by Ovid S.

Crohmălniceanu: “The lyricism of these former poems of Blaga’s has two main sources. One of the youthful vital expansion, of the soul which is tormented by the desire to burn in frenzy embraces, another one of interiorization, stirred by the mysterious relations which the spirit finds around and emotionally registers. Light thus becomes a universal energetic principle for the poet. (...). In fact, both attitudes which I have described are met, beyond their apparent opposition, in the poet’s attraction for what the philosopher used to call «the horizon of mystery» (...). He sings the cosmic energetism of light, which he perceives in an overwhelming way, as a «basic phenomenon», as embodiment of the divine «logos» of the Gnostic doctrines. It seems to him that the «verse-like» background of his life is the manifestation of an obscure, transcendent order. This only allows itself to be suspected, anticipated, imagined beyond things, which have become its mere cryptic signs. The light which the love impulses have brought about in the soul may be «the last drop» of the primordial incandescent waterfall. The orgy-like exhilaration allows, perhaps, to the god inside the human to breathe freely and to stop protesting: «sunt rob în temniță»”. (22)

Din părul tău is a love poem which provides all the thematic and expressive potentialities of Blaga’s poetry: the infusion of metaphysical longing, of suggestive symbols, of thematic recurrences, the verse freed from any constraints, the inner rhythm of the poem which only translated the rhythm of thought in metaphors of the lyrical spirit.

The lover’s hair, turned into a veil which hides the shape of the world is compared to “maya”’s veil from the Hindu mythology, in which Mircea Eliade saw “the cosmic illusion, undergone (worse: capitalized) by man as long as he is blinded by lack of knowledge”. The first part of Blaga’s poem is therefore preponderantly metaphysical, as the author reveals, by artistic means, a certain philosophical vision: “Înțelepciunea unui mag mi-a povestit odată/ de-un vâl, prin care nu putem străbate cu privirea,/ Păinjeniș, ce-ascunde pretutindeni firea,/ de nu vedem nimic din ce-i aievea”. The second part has a predominantly metaphorical character, in a passage from the lyrical ideology to the particularity of the feeling of love, a feeling which is endowed with the gift of altering the limits of reality, of turning the most humble things into mystery, of changing the limitless universe in affective spell (“Și-acum, când tu-mi îneci obraji, ochii/ în părul tău,/ eu amețit de vălurile-i negre și bogate,/ visez/ cu vălul, ce preface în mister/ tot largul lumii e urzit/ din părul tău -/ și strig,/ și strig,/ și-ntâia oară simt/ întreaga vrajă, ce-a cuprins-o magul în pvestea lui”).

Regarded from the perspective of the illusion and the mystery that it exerts upon the person in love, the feeling of love takes on unexpected resonances and metaphysical connotations. The lover is shaped of but a limited number of details, which enhance the spell of indetermination and the indefinite affective drive of the verse. The short, unequal lines from the end of the poem impress a rhythm to the feelings within the space of a low tide and high tide of living them under the spectrum of the mystery of love.

Another representative poem for the topos of love is *Cântecul spicelor*, which belongs to Blaga’s latter period of creation and which characterizes a new relation between the poet and the universe, a relation through which the lyrical I seeks to become integrated with the rhythm of nature under the power of love, a resurrected love, rediscovered at an older age.

Finding himself surrounded by nature which does not cease to flaunt its mysteries, in the poems of this period the author reveals a familiar and, at the same time an essential meaning of the things and beings which are animated by the light of love. In his definition of Blaga’s poetic universe, Eugen Simion notes that “in this Eden-like space of vegetal luxuries, where trees are in

bloom and stags walk by in a melancholy of love, there is a forbidden tree and its fruit must not be known. Love remains in a state of *temptation*, an unrevealed truth (...). In *Cântecul focului*, *Corăbii cu cenușă* and in other poems as well, Blaga is a poet of transparency. His bucolics is luminous, the space which supports the representations of eros is dominated by aerial species, the matter knows a process of purification and all the elements are part of a great white symphony. We may speak of Blaga's seraphism, which is comparable to that of Eminescu's poetry and prose.

Cântecul spicelor may be seen, on the one hand, as a song of fulfilled love which seeks its boundlessness, aspiring to the values of spirituality, in a reality which carries within itself multiple senses and reverberations. Here, love is not perceived in a sensorial tone, as a show of the unleashed senses, but it transfers its energies in a meta-reality which goes beyond pure passion, taking on pantheist and essential assumptions.

The poem is structured from the perspective of a symbolic parallelism, between a vegetal domain ("the grains") and a human one ("the girls"). Situated under the power of love, the two entities belonging to different regna seem to look for what lies beyond the horizon, beyond the heavy materiality which chains them, they seek to escape the tight circle of the earth. The enigmatic moonlight, full of the mysterious halo of the nocturnal state and the ideal forged by the girls' imagination represents the miracle born out of the discontent with the present reality, the non-adherence to the given, to the pre-established pattern and shape devoid of any spiritual gift.

Here, the attraction of the unknown, of the half-revealed is unbearable, implacable, taking on accents of pain, of longing: "Spicele-n lanuri – de dor se-nfioară, de moarte,/ când secera lunii pe boltă apare,/ ca fetele cată, cu părul de aur,/ la zeul din zare".

The sadness of the grain-girls is therefore caused by the tragic incompatibility between materiality and spirituality, by the affective discomfort issued from the attraction of the far-away and the disillusion, the impossibility of reaching the ideal.

The lyrical tension and the dynamics of the poetic images result from this game which is dominated by melancholy rather than by dramatism, a game between illusion and renunciation, between the far and the near. The girls' projection in the ideal and the longing of the grains for the spell of the moonlight are but avatars of this dynamics of the tension towards the absolute and of disillusion ("O vorbă-și trec spicele – fete-n văpaie:/ secerea lumii e numai lumină -/ cum ar putea să ne taie/ pe la genunchi, să ne culce pe spate, în arderea vântului?// Aceasta-i tristețea cea mare – a spicelor/ că nu sunt tăiate de lună,/ că numai fierul pământului/ li s-a venit să apună").

The poem *Cântecul spicelor* presents a lyrical discourse in which tension becomes melancholy and the nostalgia of ideality is the dominant lyrical attitude. The lines are full of incantatory spell, a certain transience which confers suavity and a rhetoric of pure suggestion to feelings.

Conclusions

In Lucian Blaga's poetry, the metaphysical touch is undeniable. Most of his poems have incorporated in their deepest structure a philosophical idea, the thrill of a metaphysical thought, an inquisitive impulse regarding the destiny of the human being thrown to the World and into Time, a being who tries to find his paradigmatic roots, the access to the abyssal world of the "mothers" through dream, myth, sleep, silence or love. Therefore, the dynamics of Blaga's imaginary creation is often ascensionally postured: it is a projection of impulses towards the absolute, towards the being's metaphysical roots and revelations. We tend to believe that the *poet* and *philosopher* Lucian Blaga may be rightfully considered the same creative personality, as literary

critic Cornel Moraru also noticed, “there is only one Blaga” who is situated under the representative sign of the metaphysical. The fundamental aspect of Blaga’s work is the revelatory, inaugural experience through which the creator looks for his own existential resources, in a creative approach which reveals its inner convergence and coherence, its identity and its legitimacy. Situated between mythos and logos, Blaga’s creation is rightfully fueled by both the propulsion towards the heights of reason and the initiatic approach to the depth of the mythical archetype which accounts for the ontological roots of the human.

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REPRESENTATIONS OF THE IMAGINARY IN THE ROMANIAN POETIC AVANT-GARDE

Introduction

Avant-gardism can only be effectively understood as a literary phenomenon of rupture, schism and radicalism. The departure from tradition is done, in the case of avant-gardism, in a violent way, in the name of absolute novelty and of synchronization with the data of bustling modern civilization. All avant-garde orientations (Futurism, Constructivism, Dadaism, Surrealism) have, at least as their departure point, a sharp, polemical, even virulent reaction to tradition. Literature must be placed, avant-garde writers and artists believe, on a totally new ground, starting from scratch, discarding thus everything that comes from tradition, from already lived experiences that are, therefore, dated, classified. In the *Dada Manifesto* of 1918, Tristan Tzara clearly, even vehemently formulates these postulates of the Avant-garde: “No pity. After the carnage we are left with the hope of a purified humanity. I always speak about myself because I don't want to convince, and I have no right to drag others in my wake, I'm not compelling anyone to follow me, because everyone makes his art in his own way, if he knows anything about the joy that rises like an arrow up to the astral strata, or that which descends into the mines stewn with the flowers of corpses and fertile spasms (...). Thus DADA was born, out of a need for independence, out of mistrust for the community. People who join us keep their freedom. We don't accept any theories. (...) Every man must shout: there is great destructive, negative work to be done. To sweep, to clean. (...) the abolition of memory: DADA; the abolition of the future: DADA; the absolute and indisputable belief in every god that is an immediate product of spontaneity (...). Liberty: DADA DADA DADA; - the roar of contorted pains, the interweaving of contraries and all contradictions, freaks and irrelevancies: LIFE.” No matter how paradoxical it may seem, the avant-garde extracts, as Matei Călinescu notices, “all its elements from the modernist tradition but, at the same time, it dynamites them, exaggerates them and places them in the most unexpected contexts, making them almost unrecognizable.” Surrealism, for instance, though defining itself in terms of violent rupture with tradition, with pre-established patterns, extracts some of its principles from the oneirism of German Romanticism. Dream as an imperative of creation and experience, the joining of unrelated objects with the purpose of creating a convulsive but all the more authentic beauty – all these principles are to be found in surrealist aesthetics.

André Breton, in the first *Manifesto of Surrealism*, in 1924, defines the surrealist orientation thus: “SURREALISM, *n.* Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express -- verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner -- the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern. (...) Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought. It tends to ruin once and for all all other psychic mechanisms and to substitute itself for them in solving all the principal problems of life.” The literary technique used by surrealist writers to render the primary authenticity of creation is automatic writing, in other words the quick transcription, without stop or the censorship of reason, of the most

spontaneous sensations and feelings coming from the subconscious through unrigged mental associations, taken down in their raw form. The most important principles of the avant-garde are therefore: revolt against the narrow-mindedness of the bourgeois spirit, vehement denial of the entire previous cultural edifice, adherence to artistic techniques that stimulate haphazard, the illogical, the absurd, the crossing of the barriers between the conscious and unconscious mind with the purpose of reaching that integral reality that Breton calls *surreality* etc. In Romanian literature, the avant-garde manifested itself in different aesthetic modes and models. Constructivism, for instance, questions traditional models, mythicizing instead modern technology. Constructivist writers wished to create new forms, products of human spirit that should bear no resemblance to reality. In prose, constructivism militated for a synthesis of literary genres, resorting to cinema techniques or to the technique of the neon sign. Constructivism was promoted by magazines such as "Contimporanul" (1924), "75 h.p." (1924), "Punct" (1924-1925), "Integral" (1925-1928), magazines that had a certain impact at the time. The most important representatives of the orientation were Ion Vinea, Marcel Iancu, B. Fundoianu, Ilarie Voronca, Ion Călugăru etc. Romanian Surrealism was represented by writers such as Marcel Iancu, Ilarie Voronca, Victor Brauner, Geo Bogza, Sașa Pană, Gherasim Luca etc. The most important surrealist periodicals were: "Unu" (1928-1932), "Urmuz" (1928) and "Alge" (1930).

Ilarie Voronca and the exultation of the imaginary

Before leaving for France, Ilarie Voronca published ten volumes of poetry at home, among which: *Restriști* (*Tribulations*/ 1923), *Colomba* (1927), *Ulise* (*Ulysses*/ 1928), *Brățara nopților* (*The Bracelet of the Nights*/ 1929), *Zodiac* (1930) etc. Born in 1903 in Brăila, Voronca dies on April 5, 1946, in Paris. He studies at the Law Faculty in București. He made his debut in the "Sburătorul" magazine (1921) with verse that retained the echo of Bacovia's heavy and neurotic melancholies. In 1926, he leaves for Paris, intending to get his doctorate in law; two years before, in 1924, he had established, together with the painter Victor Brauner, the Dadaist-Constructivist magazine "75 H.P.". He published in other avant-garde magazines too ("Punct", "Integral", "unu"). Undoubtedly, Ilarie Voronca's lyrical creation incorporates in its own structures the main features of Romanian avant-garde. His first poems may be placed within the range of the sentimental and melancholic tone of the provincial fair. Nonetheless, some signs of his lush later Imagism can be seen; Lovinescu, for instance, perceives them as such when he remarks, "the almost prodigious easiness of speaking in comparisons and images." Focusing on constructivism, Voronca proves, beyond the practice of lavish and bustling writing, certain qualities of literary theorist. The poet rejects, at this time, emotional sensitivity and "sick, romantic, surrealist disaggregation", proposing the model of "order, whole, classical, constructive essence." The construction of poetry had to be based, in Voronca's vision, both on a concept of order and sovereign geometry and on the principle of the "free sequence of words." On the one hand, consistency and ordered plasticity, on the other hand, a great freedom of association of statements and words. The volume *Invitation to Ball*/ *Invitație la bal* is representative for such a lyrical vision and conception. Poetic decor is represented by a bustling metropolis life, and the lyrics are concentrated to the maximum, somewhat hermetically, while image density is to suggest the rapid pace of existence, the dynamism of urban life: "Brass and zinc at the valve/ blood makes incredible leaps underground/ acid step like a word opened cub/ the field between the ribs curved or plane. // Amazon over the prairies in a dream/ trapped mind overthrown in mirrors/ noise decreases as

the price of cereals". The heterogeneity of images and of the objects they capture wants to offer the reader the impression of a feverishly lived existence and also of the siege of consciousness under the attack of powerful sensations.

The poem *Colomba*, in five cantos, is a celebration of the loved one performed by burst of sumptuous, almost delirious images of an indisputable thrill of novelty. The loved woman is, thus, "winter cut in ivory with clouds into a bucket", "rumor spread in the sky gathered on her knees like a blanket", "body like a plough-land with furrows and a fountain-like elbow" etc. The feeling of love is a form of frantic living within the framework of a nature passionately assumed by the lovers' senses, an empathic communion that transforms feelings, as Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu points out, into "physical features" ("I know the bell between the ribs and the marine plants,/ a garden carved in bones with arms like lemons/ I know the round fruits like your walking filled/ with currants in the fragrance of the weeds in the haystacks" or "you bend and ask about the gaze and the finger in the potion/ you try me as you try a locker and hit as if I were a carpet/ the knee like a door fills me with coolness/ and the blood in dissolution leans against the sky"). In the volume *Plants and Animals/ Plante și animale*, the poet expresses his adherence to the beauty of nature, in poems that build sumptuous architectures of images. One cannot speak about proper descriptions of nature, but rather about a great capacity of sensory absorption that turns into plastic, suggestive verses ("the embers in the eyes of the foxes glide in herbs", "the roses stop the wind in the pins of the dresses", "through the bars of heaven the days roll like monkeys", "the cow muzzles sniff the mountains like other udders"). The communion between the human being and the harmony of nature is complete here. The poet also celebrates, in kindness and gentleness, humble beauties, of little amplitude: "How melodious is the donkey's leg/ the small hoof like a finger touches the stone keys/ the walking hips are swaying like waters/ the donkey knows the eyelids of the paths" (*Look/ Privește*). An "Image billionaire", as Lovinescu characterized him, Ilarie Voronca resorts to metaphorism as a way to liberate the resources of the subconscious. G. Călinescu saw in Voronca a "voluptuous sensory receptivity, a sense of the plastic quality of the perfect word and a capacity of raising any perception to the rank of poetic material." On the other hand, the poet considers that there is an unacceptable gap between experience and words, an incompatibility pertaining to the different, even opposed nature of the two entities: "It is a fact that between what happens within ourselves and the fragmentary echo of words there is a voltage difference, an aortic insufficiency (...). If the purpose of the word were only to reproduce, then reproduction is a fake from the start. In the craft of writing I love precisely its weakness, its incapacity of rendering accurately (precision is always conceited and I loathe the corset, either the one of mathematics or that of the prostitute) what the thought has devised, what in a momentary lapse the nebula in me or in space allowed to become visible."

The title of the poem *Ulise/ Ulysses* is not randomly chosen, as the lyrical self defines itself through its journey into a polymorphous, decentred and chaotic reality, where the only guiding light is the obsession of visualizing new spaces, of discovering new territories, of circumscribing new sensations. The poet is therefore an alter-ego of the Homeric hero, an individual of great emotional and sensory availability, who lives the world through all his pores, in all its aspects of an astonishing vehemence of the empirical. Obviously, the syntax of the poetic text does not transcribe faithfully the syntax of the world; on the contrary, there are many distortions and gaps between the two. The poetic imaginary is often incongruous, sinuous, freed from the order of the real, resigned to representing a refraction rather than a reflection of the world into the structures

of the text. G. Călinescu captured in his *Istoria...* precisely such an abundant imagism, through which the structures of the lyrical text absorb disparate details, dispersed forms of a protean reality: "Within the limits of this imagism, one must acknowledge in Ilarie Voronca's work a voluptuous sensory availability, an excellent plastic sense of the word and a skill of raising any perception to the rank of poetic material. In fact, poetic quality does not come from metaphors understood as analogies. It lies in the extraordinary number of objects and beings that the poet can record and evoke with ecstatic voluptuousness." Nothing is stranger to Ilarie Voronca's spirit than the freezing in a pattern, inertia, standing still or retractility. The poet is, on the contrary, a spirit for whom exploration is a form of living and the concrete-sensory assuming of the world is a manifestation of his penchant for novelty, for previously uncharted areas. On the other hand, Voronca is also a poet of modern life, with all the features inherent in this condition: the bustling, fast pace, the multitude of aspects of the real presenting themselves to the eye almost instantaneously, the quick succession of events, the dynamism of movements, either interior or external, as in the following fragment: "I dedicate a hymn to you, age of mediocrity/ we stopped hunting the grey bear in the mountains of America (...)/ we are building a sky above the roofs like limbs/ on the boulevards, the sirens, the buses/ accompanying the wireless concert/ age of insurances and illuminated advertising/ the time when the English applaud raquel meller/ and refuse the bouquet of violets/ waters through light/ the great newspapers grind/ and look: the agents of the display companies/ change the linens of the walls". The poet is like a prophet looking into the future but trying to recover the workings of his own memory and the dimensions of his astonishingly sensitive perception that records not only details but also the physiognomy of the entire existence. Like any follower of the avant-garde, Voronca no longer adheres to the traditional poetic image characterized by order, harmony and balance, precisely because such an image is perceived as false, idyllic and conventional. On the contrary, the poet resorts to the convulsive, asymmetrical image, breaking the idyllicizing harmony of traditional verse and disfiguring the syntax specific to, one could say, Symbolism. Relevant in this respect is the fourth part of the poem *Ulysses/ Uliše*, where one can find the sensory frenzy so specific to Voronca. He describes a vegetable market in an abundant manner in which forms and flavors intertwine in a landscape of lush relief and the exaggerated or, on the contrary, refined comparison is the privileged stylistic device: "you stop at the vegetable shop assistant/ the green beans smile like lizards/ the constellation of peas like words flounders/ the beans sit quietly in the pods like obedient pupils in desks/ the marrows thrust their muzzles forward/ the beet like upholsterers twilight the parsley the dill/ the white radishes like rabbits the tomatoes/ the tomatoes like the cheeks of the Transylvanian girls are blurred by the egg plants/ like shawls of comfort in crystal steps/ the cauliflowers as snow delayed in the thickets of whispers/ and bottles of mineral water carrots mirrors the river (...)". The hymn dedicated to potato offers, one could say, a counterpoint to the unlimited opening to the world in the first part. The eulogy of this humble vegetable turns into an imagistic allegory of the entire life that can be found, condensed, in the unimportant body of the tubercle. Ilarie Voronca is one of the most important representatives of Romanian avant-garde through his work but also through his vocation of theorist of literature.

Ion Vinea. The “deliteraturization” of poetry

Poet, prose writer, translator and journalist, Ion Vinea founds, ever since 1912, together with Tristan Tzara and Marcel Iancu, the magazine "Simbolul", where he makes his debut with original poems and translations. In 1913, he begins his collaboration with "Noua revistă română", then with the magazines "Facla", "Rampa" and "Seara". Moreover, he collaborates with magazines such as "Chemarea", "Cronica", "Gândirea", "Adevărul literar și artistic" etc. He runs, between 1919 and 1931 the most important publication of Romanian avant-garde, "Contimporanul." His debut prose volume is *Spells and Lamp Flowers/ Descântecul și flori de lampă* (1925). In 1930 another prose volume is published, *The Paradise of Sighs/ Paradisul suspinelor*. The poems published in periodicals will be collected in a volume only in the year of the writer's death (*The Hour of the Wells/ Ora fântânilor*, 1964). Posthumously is also published the novel *Sleepwalkers/ Lunatecii*, conceived ever since the third decade of the twentieth century. Ion Vinea was also a remarkable translator from English literature. Marian Papahagi considers that "in its entirety, Vinea's work may be understood as the playing of masks that the writer wore or abandoned, a sign of a strong propensity for a dissimulation which, nonetheless, grants his work a permanent and fertile opening to interpretation." What is extremely important is the fact that Ion Vinea accompanied his lyrical fervor with an important activity as literary theorist. The writer saw literature itself hard to accept due to the lack of authenticity that it instills. It cannot render reality faithfully so it may be rejected in terms of the problem of aesthetic truth. Sometimes, formulae are abandoned, "for the simple fact of having become formulae" (Marian Papahagi). On the other hand, the melancholic, introverted poetic tone of many of Ion Vinea's poems proves to be borrowed; it is not difficult to identify, for instance, Arghezi's influence in such verse as: "To call the forgotten mistakes from old times,/ to urge the dead silence in you to speak,-/ and in your fear to hesitate again and to be wrong,/ - the same man of tears, of prayers and of vows,-/ when the mute visions floating without power/ are your fate and are nowhere" or "Why do you return, minutes long forgotten?/ Like a living swarm coming from nowhere, carried by a chant of times/ whose last verse I did not listen,/ why do you wake from death and shiver in my heart/ and you disturb my resignation with its vain tumult".

The authentic revolution of sensitivity should consist, according to Ion Vinea, in the "deliteraturization" of poetry. Poetry is an extremely subtle means of communication that does not need the contribution/support of words to express the emotional ineffableness. In order to record everyday emotions and speech in the most authentic way, the poet resorts to humble words, lacking figurative sense and preserving their own proper meaning: "We wondered along the forgotten steps./ The music in the kiosk went away a week ago – and the villas closed the green/ blinds and the silence of the empty cafeterias and the cold thrill of wells increase./ Obstinate to train calls, - we were late./ The shooting and swimming school seemed forgotten, forgotten for decades under/ the leafless rainbow torn by trees./ The watchman was so surprised, - he unlocked the chain padlock with a heavy key and we realized that the chain is the martyr of autumn./ And he brought us cold clothes in a row of cells from which we chose two" (*On the footsteps/ Pe urma pașilor*). The poetry of Ion Vinea gravitates between achievement and non-achievement, between nothingness and epiphany, between absence and presence. It represents an attempt of the poet to examine his own limits, his own subconscious experiences under the light of the conscious mind. The creation of Ion Vinea had a sinuous development, from the symbolism of the beginnings to the vehement avant-garde attitude adopted later. Matei

Călinescu underlines that “in connection with Vinea’s poetry, one has talked about reserve, discretion, apparent coldness, cerebral attitude, but all these were seen not as primary qualities but as forms of reaction against an uncommonly strong emotional background. That intuition is correct. Vinea’s poetry, in its most specific features, is the poetry of regression: confession becomes abstract, the emotional drive gets depersonalized.” The poem *Keys/ Chei* is one of the representative creations of Ion Vinea, both as regards artistic vision and in terms of poetic language. One can find here all the features of avant-garde poetry, from the censorship of lyrical emotion or the maximum reduction of emotional thrill, to the essentialization of content and novel imagery. The “intellectualized impressionism” that Șerban Cioculescu talks about is completed in this poem by a combination of images from totally separate spheres, of metaphors of maximum plasticity through which the author tries to render not the surface of things, not their tranquilizing appearances but rather their essences and latencies, those semantic and ontological dimensions likely to confer a profound identity.

In a nautical scenery drawn in a fragile-musical tone, the poet imagines a time of dusk, half real, half fabulous, where the shadows of things hesitate and the stars “sanctify”. The scenery is rather a pretext for the revelation, in the poem, of an immemorial past, where an apocalyptic rumor is perceived, the premonition of the extinction of the worlds: “The old port trees descend only at night,/ peacocks with windy wings are chosen from the shadows,/ the stars of the past without canvases are sanctified here.// As it arose here from nowhere/ where tempests stopped and cleared/ the phantom-ship with its dead lightning/ floating on the green venom of hours ...”. The marine scenery drawn by Vinea has, despite its concrete, empirical suggestions, a certain de-materialization: it resides under the sign of ideality, of giving up details in favor of a totalizing poetic idea able to render the sense of the setting. Novel juxtapositions of terms transpose us in a spectral light, with seemingly hallucinating, oneiric images, lacking any existential import. A certain synesthesia placed under the sign of the oneiric can be seen here, in these fluctuating, ever-changing pictures, marked by indeterminacy and fantastic reflexes (“Rarely in the earth violin of the dam/ the thrills talk about the nonsense of coldness./ The rocks shepherded by the blind lighthouse/ graze calmly dreaming of fanfares heard from afar./ The lunar sounds on the silky stairs got dusted.// It is the sleep of the red chains of the dead times,/ it is the autumn of the rocks in the vineyard of darkness,/ it is the verdigris eye of eternity/ where stories drowned”). The poem ends in a funeral note, actually anticipated at its very beginning by the several images hinting at the apocalypse. Actually the frequency of terms with thanatoid suggestions is high enough, from “shadows,” “night,” “phantom-ship,” “its dead lightning,” etc. to the “extinction of the worlds,” “verdigris eye of eternity,” or “vineyard of darkness.” The end closes this universe of shadows in a circle that cannot be broken, an infernal and tautological circle apparently perfectly entrenched in itself (“Doomsday/ the coffins started from here”).

The poem *The Hour of Wells/ Ora fântânilor* stands out, first of all, through its delicate contours, like a Japanese engraving, its lines purified of all empirical murmur. Only the contour of things is drawn, in fragile, ethereal, almost immaterial lines. The verse, purified of any emotion, freed from emotional tumult, has an extreme clarity, a transparency and suave imagery that points to the serenity of vision and lyrical atmosphere. The moment transcribed by the author is one of cosmic silence, of recollection in front of the spectacle of a murmuring, calm, seraphic nature. Just like in *On the Hill at Night/ Sara pe deal*, for instance, there is a moment that reiterates the genesis of the worlds, with the birth of stars marked by atemporal silence and with a seemingly non-spatial serenity of vision (“Time of starry silence,/ clear sign of nameless worlds,/ space is

in amber and fire,/ Thalassa sets rhythmically"). Immersion in the "hour of stellar silences" is accompanied, in the poet's mind, by a moment of inner balance, of retrieval of his profound identity, of his authentic inner being that lingers behind profane, everyday gestures. The silence that descends upon people and things insinuates itself into the poet's soul, as the latter is still impressed by nocturnal mystery. An intimate relationship is established between celestial and inner harmony, the signs of the world allow themselves to be read in their true, symbolical and secret light, the mind is "empty and clean," because of having retrieved original peace and a purity that allows it to see, beyond appearances, pure essences: "The holy clean voices,/ the pure foreheads and the eyes,/ the mind is empty and clean,/ cradled bells/ move in wedding dresses". "The Hour of Wells" is the hour when the voice of nature received sacred tones and meets, in the poet's conscience, with the harmony of profound thought. Shadows seem to be etherealized, objects seem weightless and the balance between man and nature is perfect. The poet now translates, in a lyrical register, the mysterious signs of nature: "The hour of the moon wells,/ - angel - whispers through shadows/ the words of prayers/ uninterpreted and dark". *The Hour of Wells/ Ora fântânilor* is an internalized pastel, the transcription of a landscape spiritualized by a lyrical self that finds, under the auspices of cosmic, atemporal silence, its balance and harmony. Without completely censoring his elegiac mood, Ion Vinea builds in his poems an oneiric and chimerical scenery, spiritualized in the highest possible degree, a landscape marked by continuous dissolution and degradation.

Geo Bogza – the solemnity of insurgence

Geo Bogza was, from the beginnings of his literary life, a fervent adherent of the avant-garde, a writer who assumed his creation in terms of intense, authentic life, and through the transcription of new, genuine experience. The writer edited the magazine "Urmuz" in 1928 and collaborated with some publications of the era such as "Flight parrot" or "one". His lyrical volumes *Journal of Sex/ Jurnal de sex* (1929) and *The Invective Poem/ Poemul invectivă* (1933) are distinguished by the intense color of lyrical emotion, the intensity of ego involvement in the text and, especially, the rebelliousness of lyrical images. What impresses here is precisely Bogza's effort to register emotion "in its untamed state" with a notation of extreme intensity. Such poetry is born of the need for aesthetic legitimacy and authentication of writing seen as nude, unrigged transcript of essential truths of being, of extreme experiences. It is a poetry that denounces the "abuse of unconsciousness" and the turning of inspiration into a "selfish occupation." Geo Bogza argues, in fact, for an elementary character of poetry in the sense of the return to things, to nature, to the simple, seemingly banal man: "poetry will have to be elementary in the sense that water and bread are elementary. Then poetry will witness an epoch-making return to life. Then everyone will be entitled to bread and poetry." The poet's relationship with the world is therefore a tense one, born of rebellion and despair, of a certain solemn vision and of the simple gesture of returning to the elementary. The critic Dan Cristea captured very clearly these aspects of Geo Bogza's writing: "the resistance, rebellion and despair of the soul call forth the comforting images of human greatness and the greatness of the universe, inducing quietness, calm and the strengthening of the spirit. The therapy of the grandiose, the theme of becoming through fusion with the world's beautiful sights, the metamorphosis of revolt into solemn and redemptive vision, represent a part of the revelations that the rich show of reality offers him." Geo Bogza approached, in the same spirit of rebellion and authenticity of report, the reportage, which is "like

a true school of life through which any writer must pass if he wants to be a true author, in whose every page, life should bustle." The best known reportages, from *Countries of Stone, Fire and Earth/ Țări de piatră, de foc și de pământ* of 1939, to *The Book of Olt/ Cartea Oltului* (1945) start from the intention to capture, in all its dimensions, an entire world, with its particular features, in the spirit of authenticity and truth.

The feeling of communication with the world and refusal of petrification, the symbolical faith in absolute values, are also to be found in the volume *Lighthouse Guard/ Paznic de far* of 1974. Here, reality and verse are entities of the same type; the poet creates a space of his own where he officiates, revealing the secret aspects of things. The critic Aurel Sasu points out that "Bogza's work tends towards an assumption of the world, in its most profound dimensions and proposes as a solution the sumptuous space of exemplary existence. Thus, literature becomes creation, in the original sense of the word, suggesting a possible evolution in the direction of archetypal knowledge or, as the author would say, through statues (...). Bogza's universe is born not by effacement but by sublimation." The poet Geo Bogza always lived and wrote with the consciousness of the fact that his chance was that of lucidly assuming his own destiny. Destiny is situated, he thinks, between two "fires," the "the world without us" and "the world within us" and therefore the only chance of the self to find a suitable position between the two dimensions of "burning" is lucidity, a merciless, corrosive, unconceding lucidity. The literature of Geo Bogza starts therefore from a debunking impulse and, no matter how strange that may seem, from a founding impulse too. On the one hand, the writer questions the very capacity of literature to authentically render reality because it relegates conflict to a "low level of sweet understanding," to a "comfortable slip into satisfaction." In an avant-garde spirit, the author believes that the role of the artist is not that of "telling" life but of living it, thus writing becomes a way of action and experiencing, of directly assuming the most diverse empirical experiences: "Exasperation and action. Exasperation against every thing that we defeat and refuse to submit to. All done with intensity, with a tumult that wreaks havoc." The semantic mechanism and the purpose of the poem *Incantation/ Descântec* starts, one may say, from a debunking impulse against a comfortable reality, with pre-established meanings, against a world where objects are too strictly matched by unilateral meanings. A love incantation, the poem has a fractured syntax and a bizarre morphology, with unknown words whose sense the reader cannot suspect. In this poem, instead of a unitary or at least coherent meaning, senses are organized in concentric circles infinitely multiplying in the parallel mirrors of words. Thus, a sort of dispersion of the lyrical perception occurs, while reading becomes sinuous, problematic, non-unitary. Poetic language assumes a state of crisis and the reader has to permanently retrace the evolution of meanings, to come back to the starting point, to reconsider his or her own expectations. The radical character of language, the hallucinating vision, the breaking of links between words – these are the most important devices employed in the poem. "Hau! Hau! Hau!/ rota dria vau/ simo selmo valen/ fair-haired girl/ vermo sisle dur/ here around/ Klimer zebra freu/ neither you/ nor me/ prayers to God/ klimer zebra freu/ but us/ o us/ in us/ yes us/ trebun cimat dur/ large/ large/ illnesses break/ headaches/ heavenly cure/ in my chest grows/ simo selmo valen/ fair-haired girl". Poetic images are – beyond the strange lexical inventions that generate them – of certain ethereality. The repetition of the word "we" has the effect of inducing an atmosphere of charm, harmony, of emotional incantation in this verse of pure avant-garde inspiration. A nonconformist spirit that always refused the freezing in moulds and assumed authenticity as a therapy of writing and existence, Geo Bogza reveals himself to us both as a *writer* and as a *consciousness* of his time.

In conclusion, one might say that the avant-garde is nothing but a sign of an urgent need for change. Change of mentality, of literary techniques, of the sense of values. And the lyric creations of Ilarie Voronca, Ion Vinea and Geo Bogza represent quite eloquent illustrations of such a need for changing language, lyric mentality and imaginary horizon. The refreshing action taken by the avant-garde, though “shocking” or virulent to the habits and expectations of an indolent audience, was quite purifying. In fact, as is well known, any destructive movement has a creative potential, a fact noticed, for instance, by the writer Ivan Bunin, in a paradox: “To destroy means to create.” The Avant-garde assumed precisely this role, of refusing compromise, of debunking any stereotypes and aesthetic canons, of pursuing a radical renewal of poetic language.

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E. LOVINESCU AND THE ART OF PORTRAIT

E. Lovinescu's criticist approach is basically one that inherits the French criticist school, in the descendance of Lemaitre (who thought that criticism was „l'art de jouir des livres”) or A. France, epicureans to whom he owes the natural modulations of a personal temper and sensibility. The impressionist method is especially relevant by the horror of an hermetically closed system, for the lack of adherence to cannon and rigid forms, for the anti-dogmatic attitude that can be identified, directly or implicitly, in Lovinescu's criticism. From his point of view, the substance of the work of art, which is by its plural nature diffused, cannot be assumed by some exclusivist concepts, too rigid, too abstract to circumscribe in the most genuine way the living, irreducible reality of the work of art. On the contrary, literary criticism must appeal to the sentiment, to the feeling, assuming intuition and an empathic disposition, featuring mobility and refinement. In this order, E. Lovinescu's criticism may be defined in the terms of a relative balance between the refinement spirit and the geometric one. By all this features found in an optimal dose, the critic gains access to the interior universe of the work of art, goes through its most profound modulations, without aggressing or falsifying in any way its conformation. Thus, in a certain way, criticism re-creates its object, since it takes the initiative and creatively enriches it on behalf of the data in the critic consciousness. The impressionist method to which he subscribes at the beginning opposes the dogmatic judgment, the dictatorial rationalization of the literary work, as well as to the exhaustion of its meanings by the appliance of too strict conceptual models. Such a method does not aspire to completely explain the structures of the work but, on the contrary, recognizes with a sort of modesty its skeptic vocation, basically assuming its own limits and an inherent relativity of the assertions. Critic impressionism results, in Lovinescu's view, from two complementary operations which are, nevertheless, distinctive – an operation of impression simplification and by reducing it to “essential elements of an idea” and an operatio of contouring the ability of expression of the literary work.

Lovinescu's criticism therefore assumes the study of the work by a pre-existant and ferm adherence to its intimate structure – it focuses on the anexation of the work not by the idea, by the concept, but by the mobile intuition, that is alive, able to accomplish the consonance, the consubstantiality of the two poles of the equation of reception: creative consciousness / receiving consciousness. It is from the interdependence of the two poles that the literary work is born. Also related to E. Lovinescu's impressionist method is the so disputed problem of his „revisions”, a problem that may find its plausible explanation only by being connected to the theory of esthetic value mutations, according to which esthetic values have a chrono-topic existence and, while progressing in time and leaving the epoch when they were created, they gradually degrade their meanings and semantic resources. Another factor of the relativity in these values is represented by the receiving consciousness, as it is in evolution, in a continuous psychological development. We must notice, on the other hand, that E. Lovinescu's criticism is not the result of a spontaneous generation. It is unconceivable outside the idea of continuity, of integration in the frames of a Romanian critic tradition, and that it must be considered from the perspective of a fracture, of a mutation from the past. These are, in fact, the terms in the absence of which the equation represented by Lovinescu's work cannot be solved: continuity and fracture. The continuity may very easily be seen in relation with Titu Maiorescu's works, who's descendant Lovinescu considers himself to be, especially on the subject of the specificity of the esthetic, a

subject Maiorescu had also approached and that forms the basis of Lovinescu's criticism. The fracture is noticeable in Lovinescu's theory of imitation, a theory which corrects Maiorescu's theory of the forms without content but, also, in terms of fracture we may define the critic's fracture with the criticism of Gherea, N. Iorga or Ibraileanu, which somehow took the literary work out of the esthetic principle's domination, measuring it with improper tools of a sociologic kind and so on. And therefore alienating its essence. Lovinescu moves the accent on the esthetic factor, reintegrating the literary work in its most personal space, the only able to offer it chances of survival.

The sovereign principle of the autonomy of the esthetic and ethnic represents an ideological imperative with the most important consequences for the evolution of Lovinescu's criticism. Above all, Lovinescu notices, following Titu Maiorescu, that the problem of morality in art is in fact a false problem: a work of art is immoral only if it is not esthetically valid. The work of art's "morality" is only measurable on the terms of its esthetic accomplishment, and not on the basis of some conceptual tools which are foreign to the domain of literary art. Nevertheless, a content based on ethnic values validates esthetically a literary work, because, as the critic underlines: „etnicul poate fi un determinant estetic în sensul limitării virtualităților estetice ale unei rase la anumite forme sau moduri de expresie, dar nu se confundă cu însuși esteticul”, which is „categorie specifică a sensibilității omenești ce se dezvoltă în cadre și în material etnic, dar se conduce după legi proprii”. The ethnic, as well as the ethic, are therefore improper for an Aesthetics of the work of art, because they are of a different essence. From the postulation of the theory of the esthetic results, thus, the consequence of literary work evaluation exclusively determined by their intrinsic esthetic modulation, in the absence of intrusion of inefficient other criteria.

The concept of modernism holds, for Lovinescu, obvious new accents, which cannot be delimited or explained without using other of his theses. First of all, this concept must be connected to the theory of synchronism, defined in *Istoria civilizației române moderne / The History of Modern Romanian Civilisation*, a theory that refines and corrects Maiorescu's theory of the forms without content. Due to the interferences, the correspondance between cultures (and we sense here a certain polemic accent towards Spengler, who had argued that it is isolation and not communication that represents the fundamental functioning law of cultures), the phenomenon of developed cultures imitation by low amplitude cultures becomes even more necessary as the mass-communication means develop. The result of imitation is a certain uniformity, a sort of cultural entropy, a tendency to equalize the conceptual horizon of an epoch: „Cu mijloacele de răspândire instantanee ale timpurilor moderne, puterea de difuziune a imitației a devenit aproape nelimitată. Iată pentru ce caracteristica epocii noastre e tendința de generalizare și de uniformizare a obiceiurilor și instituțiilor”. In a first stage, imitation is integral, and further on, with the accentuation of the process of cultural development it becomes a selective criterion, determined by the inner needs and realities. But Lovinescu argues that the forms, values, dimensions of a culture suffer an adaptation, a deformation dictated by the social-historical background of the culture. These cultural values are only partially reflected, as the phenomenon is mainly one of cultural refraction: „trecând de la un mediu etnic la altul, ideea se refractă: unghiul de refracție constituie originalitatea fiecărui popor”. The imitative process is composed of *integrality and rase adaptation* „mecanismul oricărei imitații revoluționare se descompune, însă, în două elemente esențiale: în transplantarea integrală a invenției și, apoi, în prelucrarea ei prin adaptări la spiritul rasei”.

Along with imitation, Lovinescu also speaks of a „spirit of centuries”, *saeculum* (as Tacitus used to call it), which would be: „o totalitate de condiții materiale și morale configuratoare ale vieții popoarelor europene într-o epocă dată”. In the synchronization to this “spirit of the century” the concept of modernism finds its appropriate expression and configuration. As a matter of fact, modernism represents, for E. Lovinescu, the very literary expression of synchronism and circumscribes the meaning of literary evolution towards a double renewal, both on the thematic and expressive level. Generally speaking, modernism is seen as a progressive movement, marking and ascending direction in the field of literature and irreducible to one or the other modernist concepts. The concept of modernism integrates the other modernist movements, passing through them and at the same time dominating them. Modernism may be compared to a flux that unifies and models works, creative personalities and stylistic paradigms, regardless of their belonging to a movement or the other, as long as the movement itself is synchronous to the “spirit of the century”, a fact that is also noted by E. Simion, among others: „Modernismul nu e, așadar, un curent literar, nu are, ca simbolismul, o doctrină estetică unitară. Scriitorii de la *Sburătorul* acoperă aproape întreg spațiul stilistic al literaturii interbelice. Unii sunt simbolişti, alții ermetici sau extremişti, fantezişti, ori descriptivi şi realişti”. Conceptualized in his critical studies, modernism is found, reconfigured, in Lovinescu’s memories, as an underground flux of ideas which animates the text, offers new connotations to it, reveals its original dimensions.

The autobiographical discourse is part of the marginal literary genres, by its expressive aspects which place it on the limit of fiction and nonfiction but also by its relative freedom compared with the other literary types and genres. Based, naturally, on the resources of autospecularity, the diary has a bipolar geography: on one side it assumes the risk of recording the more or less evident movement of the creative ego under the regime of sincerity while on the other side it takes the privilege of noting the exterior reality’s data, of surprising the portraits of the contemporary personalities, of replaying gestures, events, scenes witnessed or experienced by the author. It is this bipolar register of mechanisms responsible for the autobiographic discourse that creates the polymorphism of the genre, which is hard to frame in a certain stylistic or discursive category, and has fluctuating conceptual limits and extremely mobile knowledge guidelines. The autobiographical discourse absorbs in its texture the subjectivity and the refferentiality that contour the existence of the author. From the dynamics of this dialectics of seen aspects and unseen aspects, of the text and subtext, of the immediate reality and an affectivity retracted in interiority results, as a matter of fact, the exceptional dynamics of this type of discourse. At the same time, the identity between the auctorial ego and the narrator is absolute and undisputable. A discourse with fragile boundaries and inconstant guidelines, legitimated by a poetics of the fragmentary and randomization, the autobiographical discourse assumes its condition exactly by using a sum of limitations and nuances which regain its physiognomy and form in all their semantic richness.

E. Lovinescu, the most important promoter of modernism in Romanian literature and culture, discussed the autobiographical genre in his critical reflections. In a paragraph entitled significantly *Primejdiiile și limitările memorialistice contemporane / The Dangers and Limitations of Contemporary Diarism*, Lovinescu draws the specific features of this type of literature by noting the limits and limitations assumed by the genre: „Scop ultim al oricărei literaturi memorialistice, interesul documentar își găsește o limitare în însăși limitarea personalității sociale a scriitorului; scoasă dintr-o experiență strictă, ea nu poate acoperi decât o arie restrânsă de cunoaștere și de

raporturi, fără posibilitățile de transcendere ale literaturii de creațiune în care, când nu-l născocește pe de-a-ntregul, scriitorul își intensifică în voie elementul prim al experienței sale; suprapusă strict pe realitate, memorialistica se configurează, așadar, pe fapte și experiențe fatal reduse și ca număr și ca importanță, întrucât, cu lipsa ei de acțiune socială, viața scriitorilor evoluează într-un cerc de abstracții ideologice, de preocupări profesionale și de mărunțișuri cotidiene destul de neînsemnate pentru a nu solicita unda curiozității publice”. Alongside these ineluctable limits, related to the very condition of the diaristic text, this type of discourse is threatened by the danger represented by the susceptibility of the contemporaries which are to recognize themselves in the pages, not exactly in the most favorable colors. The remedy of this kind of danger is the impartiality of the perspective, the impersonality of perception and the equidistance of the stylistic register: „Față de astfel de limitări și de primejdii izvorâte din însuși genul memorialistic, ca și din insuficiența materialului, nu există decât o singură atitudine posibilă: purificarea prin despersonalizare și prin acordarea unei demnități literare ce-i lipsește, altfel, din proveniență. Orice operă de artă pornește de la un material amorf și cenușiu, valabil numai prin prelucrarea lui în substanță estetică; viața literară a unei țări nu e atât de lipsită de elemente prime pentru a nu putea fi elaborată în artă; puțin interesantă în sine și nu departe de a părea abuzivă chiar, anecdota mărunță poate fi ridicată la o semnificație apreciabilă prin valoarea sa psihologică; și, purificată de toate reziduurile prin impersonalizare, poate fi înălțată la demnitatea faptelor zămislite sub semnul neclintit al esteticului”.

In E. Lovinescu's *Memorii / Memories* all these servitudes and benefices are seen clearly in this type of writing that is ambivalent, reflecting the assessment of the interiority and the radiography of exterior data, of a dynamic and contradictory reality. From the pages of diary written by the critic there is no image of an Olympian temper to be found. On the contrary, these are pages animated by a polemic instinct, marked by the author's idiosyncrasies, touched by the pamphletary nerve of a writer who often contradicts his declared need of impersonality and temperance while evoking his contemporaries. The subjectivity in the text of his memories is in fact the latent expressive resource which offers the discourse seductive force, authenticity and fascination. It is obvious that, read today, many of the asperities have lost almost completely their impact and acuity; only an evoking vibrance resists, the author's will of plasticizing a certain temperamental feature, of revealing events and facts that are revelatory for the ambiance of the epoch he had lived in.

Ileana Vrancea, in *E. Lovinescu. Artistul / E. Lovinescu. The Artist* considers that Lovinescu's *Memorii* preserve their status and viability not by the rigor of the document or by the authentic revelation of some existential contexts but by the expressivity of the portraits: „Dacă, în general, *Memoriile* rămân nu prin autenticitatea documentului – contemporanii criticului au demonstrat-o suficient – ci prin arta portretistică, investitura maximă care li s-a acordat îndeobște a putut fi perfect justificată, la data apariției volumelor, pentru noutatea genului la noi; dar adevărata artă portretistică a moralistului, descărcată de digresiunile unei anecdotici nu întotdeauna semnificative, de decorativitatea unei copleșitoare inflații imagistice declanșate după un mecanism-tip, se dezvăluie desăvârșită, în formele cele mai pure, nu în ocolișurile șerpuitoare ale memorialistului, prin «măracinișuri spinoase», unde polița trebuie plătită la adăpostul «strictei imparțialități», unde materia se împrăștie și seva se diluează; ci în blocurile unitare, tăiate în piatră dură, din care omul și opera se nasc printr-o lovitură de maestru și capătă viață sub privirile fascinante ale unui Pygmalion, desprins de veninurile și complezențele pământești și captat doar de torsul stelelor. Un asemenea gen de portrete există și în *Memorii*, dar nu el dă tonul; cei trei

Caragiale, Sadoveanu – ca să pomenim doar câteva – fac parte din familia de spirite, prezentă parțial în *Figurine*, destul de frecventă în *Critice*, în cele cinci volume de *Istoria literaturii române contemporane*; ea domină însă ciclul de studii junimiste – monografia *Titu Maiorescu*, cele două volume din *Titu Maiorescu și contemporanii lui* și ajunge la apogeu în *Antologia scriitorilor ocazionali*”.

A certain delay may be noticed between the declarations of the critic and the observations of the portraitist, a fact that is also remarked by Ileana Vrancea. The conclusion of the critical perception do not always coincide with those of the diarist, but, on the contrary, in many situations there is a lack of concordance between the two types of assessment. Such examples of incongruence are represented by Mateiu I. Caragiale, Mihail Sadoveanu or Camil Petrescu, writers who are seen totally different in the critical studies and in the pages of diary. Lovinescu excels, therefore, in his *Memories*, in the technique of portrait, which is extremely suggestive and plastic, capturing people in their characteristic background, in the relevance of their temper but also in the dynamics of their interior evolution. It is obviously a psychological portrait, based on the psychological reactions, but not avoiding the details, the atmosphere surrounding the figures of the contemporaries. The pitoresque and the anecdotic have a remarkable function in the configuration of the portraits: they put the characters in a social and artistic background and offer them color and form, a personal identity drawn from the consonance between the character and the background.

A frequently used technique is that of Balzacian descent in space and time, but also of surprising a type of temperament in its living movement, in the dynamism of the immediate reaction, in its psychological and affective nudity. The beginning of the chapter dedicated to Ion Barbu is very relevant, as in it the precise and at the same time baroque notation of the atmospheric climate interweaves with the evoking description and with the description of a human type in its primordial movements, recorded with a prompt sensitive acuity. The scenic dynamism, the expositive feature or the pregnancy of the revelatory detail are also part of this chapter: „Pe când sub ploaia putredă a toamnei, ce unea cerul și cu pământul spongios într-un giulgiu lichid, fanfarele dolente ale marșului funebru duceau rămășițele lui Vlahuță, ușa biroului meu s-a deschis pentru a face loc unui tânăr subțiratic, tip oriental, smolit, cu ochii, după cum s-a spus, vegetali, de plante acvatice, cu pasul precipitat și decis. Se numea «Popescu», era poet, și-mi întinse un caiet cu aparențe sumare, pe a cărui primă pagină se citea: *Copacul*. Abia începui să descifrez câteva versuri când, nervos, luându-și scaunul de la locul său, tânărul și-l împlântă cu energie lângă fotoliul meu pe care, cu priviri laterale, îl trăsei puțin la o parte; tânărul se apropie din nou cu insistență: scenă clasică de teatru, de dominație sau de intimidare. Citii o poezie, două, trei: versuri parnasiene, dure, lapidare, ceva din Heredia, din Leconte de Lisle, pe fondul frenetic al lui Nietzsche, cu un material verbal personal și o tăietură energică. Aveam în față un poet căruia îi mai lipsea doar un pseudonim”. Ion Barbu’s Portrait, starting under these narrative-dramatic conditions, is developed and fulfilled by the insertion of characterial observations and moral-affective assessments. The portrait becomes, in this moment of development, an axiological one: „Omul nu s-ar putea spune că e comod. Acum, după treisprezece ani de raporturi variate, cu inexplicabile soluții de continuitate, după ce de atâtea ori ne-au prins razele oblice ale soarelui în exaltări poetice, în calmul biroului meu, sau pe aleile Cișmigiului, în apoteozele primăverii, n-aș putea să nu confirm că omul nu e comod. Nu e comod, mai întâi, prin inegalitatea de umoare și, deci, prin lipsa unității de reacțiune, ceea ce imprimă o basculare reacțiilor în nesiguranța continuității; nu e comod prin irascibilitate și agresivitate, prin atitudini

tiranice și exclusive, cum ar fi un antisemitism intempestiv afirmat sau o necesitate de respectabilitate ostentativ proclamată cu orice ocazie: nu e comod, dar cât e de interesant!”.

But the usage of anecdote and narrative digression is not always salutary for the success of Lovinescu's portraits. When the notation of physical features, dense, sober, but detailed, meets the moralist aspect of the phrase, the psychological geography and the illustrative scene, the portrait gains pregnancy and expressiveness, affective color and the most appropriate tone. There are some portraits in which the infusions of lyrism are dominant and the notations have a more pronounced metaphorical tendency; the flow of memory amplifies the affective vibration of the phrase and the verb develops the volutes of a too evident subjectivity. Such a portrait is that of Ilarie Voronca, where, around a dominant feature – the lack of initiative, excessive timidity, the critic creates, by an accumulation of epithets, an agglutinating and at the same time lyric portrait while connecting the man's psychology with his works: „Substanța adevărată a psihologiei poetului se poate descifra în *Restriști*: un suflet timid, nostalgic, sentimental, răvășit, descompus, suflet legat de țară, de pământ, inactual, inutil, cu voinți dizolvate în veleități, cu entuziasmuri puerile, gingașe și prețioase, concepând de altfel și meschinăria, dar inapt în a o realiza sau dându-i, fără să vrea, o candoare ce o face inocuă; suflet moldovenesc (...), risipit în vânt ca o scamă de pădărie, suflet de toamnă și de învins, incapabil de acțiune și de inițiativă, suflet de Mărculescu și nu de Marcus, râvnind să devină funcționar român, cu ore de serviciu fixe, comod, ierarhic, tremurând la deschiderea ușii, și cu aspirația ascunsă de a fi înscris la bătrânețe în cartea de aur a pensionarilor români (...). Voronca al nostru, pădăria risipită la vânt, funigelul călător la cea mai mică adiere, iepurele de casă ascuns sub foaia de varză, prefăcut într-un războinic cu pistoale la brâu, cu chivără și cu paloș în mâini și în dinți! Minunată putere bovarică de a te proiecta altfel decât cum ești!”.

There are, in the gallery of Lovinescu's portraits, some character drafts in which perception totally changes its perspective and dimensions, the serenity and personality turning into incisiveness and polemic tendency. Vasile Parvan's portrait is one of these cases: the cold, lucid perspective of the critic finds, behind the exterior reactions and behavior of the scholar the hidden features of his personality, those psychological and affective dominances which mobilize his energies and intellectual and moral resorts. Lovinescu uses synthetic expressions, enumerations of specific details, some drawn in irony, some in full pregnancy: „Un inconformism sufletesc categoric ne-a precizat de la primele noastre întâlniri o poziție de ostilitate, tacită sau pe față, după împrejurări, păstrată, de altfel, fără întrerupere, intactă de nu și activă; inteligent, studios, dar, mai presus de orice, ambițios și orgolios până la dezumanizare, ipnotizat în voința exclusivă de a se afirma și ajunge, superior înarmat, așadar, în arena existenței, el se prezenta, în schimb, cu totul dezarmat în fața unui om lipsit de dorința de a poza sau parveni, desfăcut de prejudecăți academice, de un diletantism, care, prin faptul independenței morale și materiale, își putea permite o libertate de vorbă fără altă frână decât cea a bunului-simț (...) Pârvan reprezenta un exemplu pregnant de «pitiatism», adică de obiectivare a voinței prin simpla forță de sugestie, de persuasiune, obiectivare capabilă de a se transforma, în ordinea biologică, în adevărate epidemii (...)”.

In Parvan's portrait it is not only the moral-intellectual features of the scholar that are underlined (the massive will, the subordination of all spiritual resources for the accomplishment of the purpose, the necessary imperative of intellectual soberness, “the powerful will of becoming”); Lovinescu also expresses some stylistic observations on Parvan's works which, beyond their scientific aspect, are written in a prolix style, marked by pathetic images, by an

excessively rhetoric tonality and a phraseology that is often disarticulated: „nemulțumiți numai cu activitatea lui științifică și, mai ales, cu organizația ei, unii din ucenicii lui și alți câțiva mistici de după război, ortodocși sau nu, au încercat să găsească în Pârvan un reazim ideologic, văzând în el un filosof și un mare scriitor. N-aș voi să mă rostesc asupra misticei lui Pârvan, întrucât lipsa de aderență față de o astfel de atitudine sufletească nu-mi lasă minimul de simpatie de care e nevoie pentru a fi judecător util și imparțial; cât despre cugetarea lui filosofică, ea este o simplă banalitate, mascată sub o insuportabilă grandilocvență stilistică. *Formele istorice* și *Memoriale* reprezintă, de fapt, modele intolerabile de patetism verbal, de beție de cuvinte, locurile comune ale reflecției asupra vieții, învăluite într-o frazeologie bombastică, cu aere inspirate și mistice, ce puteau impresiona pe doamnele și pe tinerii din jurul catedrei lui, dar nu rezistă unei elementare analize a bunului-simț”.

A considerable part in Lovinescu's *Memories* is occupied by Nicolae Iorga's personality, who is hard to draw in a single portrait; the critic uses the so-called biographic portrait, suprising the character features of a personality in its interior and exterior development, in the dynamics of its diachronic evolution. The great historian's profile is contoured by integrating it in a particular existential context but also by summing the psychological data into a portrait made of ambivalent elements, in which the admiration and contestation interweave, a fact that was also remarked by Eugen Simion, who also notices the recurrence of some portraits: „Unele *portrete* revin. Imaginea lui T. Maiorescu, de pildă, obsedează pe E. Lovinescu. Ceva scapă totdeauna criticului și, în alt capitol, el revine la schița portretului dinainte. Tot așa, N. Iorga, figura biblică a literaturii lui Lovinescu. Față de marele istoric, criticul are sentimentul pe care îl aveau, probabil, primii creștini față de Dumnezeu: o credință plină de spaimă. Chiar și atunci când îl detestă (în sens critic), negația e, la Lovinescu, stăpânită de admirație. Imaginea ce traduce mai bine acest sentiment e aceea a unui N. Iorga – arhanghel cu biciul de foc alungând fariseii și zarafii din templu”. Iorga's authority over the generation Lovinescu was part of it beyond any doubt and recognized by the critic. The passages in the *Memories* describing the beginnings of Iorga's activity fully use the rhetoric of the epopee, with a visionary tendency of the phrase, with a hyperbolic dimension of the figures and a titanian confrontation between old and new. By such a projection in enormous and visionary, Iorga's figure gains a prophetic status, of a teacher with overwhelming authority, but also of an iconoclast of values with a pre-established and diminished prestige: „Pe la 1900, d. N. Iorga se impunea atenției tinerimii prin două aspecte: pe de o parte, un neobosit adunător de documente, cu o autoritate misterioasă și necontrolabilă și cu un ciclu de legende asupra activității și memoriei sale; pe de alta, un iconoclast al valorilor consacrate. Totul i se părea superficial în instituțiile noastre culturale: în Universitate, la Academie, la Ateneu, totul era de reformat; cu alte mijloace, el voia să repete lupta lui Maiorescu împotriva formeii fără fond. Tocilescu, Urechia, Hasdeu continuau, în unele privinți, generația de la 1848, cu o știință, desigur, alta, dar cu aceleași metode; departe de a fi intrat în faza pozitivă, vegetam într-un romantism științific, creând forme înainte de a fi venit fondul; insistând mai puțin în exagerarea patriotică, deoarece Maiorescu o înfrânase, amestecam încă sentimentul național în toate manifestările culturale”. The portrait of the man seems to be extended in the architecture of his overwhelming works, in the vaste horizons with a luxuriant spiritual geography proposed by Iorga's works.

In the configuration of Nicolae Iorga's portrait, Lovinescu also uses a technique of correspondences and parallelisms, in which the temperamental data and intellectual features of the historian are compared to those of Maiorescu. The role of the two in the reformation of Romanian culture is, somehow similar: „După douăzeci de ani, tânărul istoric continua, așadar, opera distructivă a criticului de la Iași și, de nu avea autoritatea lui Maiorescu, avea verva,

pasiunea, tinerețea comunicativă și stăruința de a reveni asupra aceluiași lucru, neobosit, lovind și dărâmand – spectacol impresionant al unei adevărate gigantomahii intelectuale; trăiam în crepusculul zeilor. Departe de noi, zeii lui Maiorescu ne interesau mai puțin, pe când zeii profesorului nostru erau zeii la care ne închinam și noi: ne bucuram, deci, văzându-i rostogolindu-se de pe socluri. Trecea duhul răzbunării deasupra măririlor și din ruina lor speram poate să ne înălțăm noi, din instinctul obscur ce aduce pe tineri în jurul catastrofei înaintașilor. Se prăbușeau Tocilescu, Urechia, Xenopol și chiar Hasdeu, se despica pământul; în bubuitul tunetelor, din rotocoalele de fum și în mirosul de pucioasă se desprindea, totuși, încetul cu încetul, o nouă statuă ridicată din sfărămiturile celorlalte”. Lovinescu also makes use, in the pages dedicated to Nicolae Iorga, to the expressive resources of the synthetic portrait, in which the concision of the expressions meets the pregnancy of moral notation or the incisiveness of psychological observation: „Ca și în Ion Eliade-Rădulescu și în B.P. Hasdeu – și în N. Iorga stăpânea, de fapt, același suflet neastâmpărat, proteic, vast, fără o adâncime egală, răzvrătit, cu un fond totuși conservator, de un romantism neînfrânat, războinic și neconsecvent, egocentric până la diformitate, devorat de imaginație și de ambiție, capabil de avânturi mari, dar scoborându-se la micimi, suflet transfuzibil ce nu se recunoaște pe sine de câte ori apare sub un nou înveliș terestru”.

Under the auspice of typological diversity of E. Lovinescu's portraits, it is nevertheless interesting to see the portrait of Mateiu I. Caragiale, revealed by underlining his belonging to a “family of spirits”. The technique of finding filiations, of recovering relations and correspondences determined by a certain literary heredity is predominant here. The interior face of Mateiu is also drawn from these permanent parallelisms and filiations with his father's temperament and personality. Lovinescu underlines this: „Matei moștenise ceea ce, considerat numai în rezultate, se numește sterilitate, iar privit și în cauze ia numele de înaltă conștiință artistică (...). Originea sterilității stă, probabil, în natura instrumentului psihic, în lipsa de îmbucare a cine știe căror resorturi. Aprig în critica societății în care a trăit, bătrânul i s-a adaptat totuși cu exces (...). La Matei, combustiunea forțelor sufletești s-a făcut întrucâtva altfel. Nu moștenise nimic din sociabilitatea, din nevoia de a fi în tovărășie numeroasă, în continuă reprezentare, din verva tatălui său, risipite în fața unei galerii mute de admirație. Era mai mult un nesociabil, un singuratec, cu aparențe ursuze și posomorâte. Numai între prieteni, în intimitate, reapărea demonul părintesc al elocinței și al paradoxului. Ca și la bătrânul Ion, ca și la fratele său Luca, la temelia minții lui Matei stăpânea o memorie uluitoare și dezordonată de autodidact fără alegere, cu apucături enciclopedice, dar mai ales îndreptată în domeniul trecutului și al inutilului. Inconformismul lui nu era numai teoretic, ca la tatăl său, ci integral. Matei n-a fost numai un revoltat, ci și un învins (...). Încă de mult își crease un personaj exterior și interior, izolat și singular; nu știu întrucât și-l studia, dar îl realizase definitiv. Închis în el, cu aerele zbârlite ale unui arici retractat, cu absență distantă, cu râie fanariotă acoperită de blazon bizantin, împăunat chiar în vremea când era silit să apară fără cea mai simplă decență vestimentară, ceremonios și protocolar, timid pentru că era orgolios peste măsură, sau orgolios ca să nu pară prea timid, cu fumuri nobilitare împrăștiate din pipele iluziei, cu preocupări de lucruri rare, subtile și inutile, cu risipă de cunoștințe prezentate sub forma paradoxului mistificator al tatălui său, în fața căruia competența oricui amuțea – Matei realizase un personaj pe care îl voia numai aristocratic, deși era mai mult curios, ciudat, punct de plecare a unor legende în care, poate, mitomania lui esențială se satisfacea. În artă, în afară de sterilitate – sau înaltă conștiință artistică – el moștenise de la tatăl său, și cultul formei, dragostea cuvântului”.

Maiorescu's portrait is a proof of the spiritual and expression classicism poured by Lovinescu in the characteriologic frames of the profiles in *Memories*. Without abusing the figures, and also refusing the excess of exactitude and the inflammation of the tone, the critic rebuilds, in the austere gesticulation of the phrase, the effigy-portrait of the Junimea's mentor, by illustrating his dominant features: optimism, Olympian balance, harmony: „Maiorescu a impus epocii nu atât prin noutatea cugetării, nici prin hărnicia investigației, întrucât epicureismul intelectual era unul din aspectele acestui olimpian, ci prin seninătatea și cumpătarea cugetării, prin ascendentul moral și prin incomparabilul talent de a săpa în marmura cuvintelor ca un statuar antic; a mai impus prin armonia definitivă ce se desprindea din întreaga lui personalitate, prin adaptarea gestului la gând, a vieții practice la teorie, prin euritmia formei și a fondului, prin incisivitate și seninătate; a mai impus și prin optimismul voluntar al oamenilor superiori, clădit pe fundament de pesimism, nu optimismul nătângilor ce se încordează spre bunurile aparente ale vieții, ci optimismul omului speculativ ce a dat la o parte vălul Maei, scrutând insondabilul tragic al destinului omenesc. Nu e om superior fără această viziune pesimistă; dar nu e om mare și folositor, care să nu se reculeagă la timp din amețala vidului, pentru a-și afirma voința de a fi și de a dura în fața neantului și caducității universale. Pilda unui astfel de optimism ne-a dat-o Maiorescu, întrucât, pe temelia unei dezabuzări totale, a ridicat afirmația principală a adevărului și binelui”. But Lovinescu also draws here the oratoric qualities of Maiorescu: the studied theatric art, the Olympian calm, the retained gesticulation („În astfel de condiții de formație spirituală, se înțelege de la sine sporul de prestigiu pe care-l câștiga Maiorescu asupra noastră prin acțiunea cursurilor sale universitare, cu dicțiunea lui impecabilă, susținută de o gesticulație expresivă, cu fluidul autorității desprins din armonia întregei lui ființe morale și fizice. Oratoria lui conținea, negreșit, și un element teatral, un element arhitectural, prin dispoziția ordonată și migălos studiată, în care se desfășura: pe ultima bătaie a ceasului din peretele din față cădea și ultima vorbă a oratorului, cu grația unei volute perfect încheiate, dar și cu satisfacția unei demonstrații perfect reușite, fără deviația unei miimi de secundă”).

In drawing the portraits of the younger writers Lovinescu had supported, we find the same virtues of diaristic prose: rigor and expressive plasticity, the magic of lyric and evoking discourse, the pleasure of detailed description, the air of severity in which some deviations and temperamental exaggerations are contoured. Such an illustrative portrait is that of Camil Petrescu, a portrait built in several moments. First of all, the critic establishes a first image of the writer, that is somehow neutral, by using notations which surprise the reading of a play: „Imaginea scriitorului începe să mi se fixeze, prin unele trăsături psihologice, abia mai târziu, în primele luni ale *Sburătorului*, în cadrul lecturii piesei sale *Jocul ielelor*, într-un amurg de mai, sub lăncile înroșite ale soarelui asasinat în dreptul ferestrelor largi ale biroului meu. Lipsa de autoritate a cititorului, nervozitatea lui sporită de intrările și ieșirile ascultătorilor, nu i-au dat lecturii caracterul de succes categoric așteptat, se vede, cu certitudine; mai contribuiau, de altfel, și defectele piesei, evidente și mai târziu, după câțiva ani, la o nouă lectură, când nu mai putea fi vorba de lipsa de autoritate și de nervozitate. Cu indulgență de sine, naturală, de altfel, tuturor începătorilor, cititorul nu-și explica însă «insuccesul» decât prin insuficiența lecturii; un semiton mai sus sau mai jos, o mlădiere a glasului, o tăcere prelungită ar fi dat cu totul altă putere de contagiune paginilor citite. Certitudinea părea încă de atunci a lua forme de nemulțumire vexată, amorțită, ce e dreptul, de o umbră de timiditate, dispărută repede (...)”. A second moment of the portrait plays with much more precision the characteriologic data of the young writer: „În afară de aceste lecturi, Camil Petrescu se distingea și prin spiritul său vioi, mobil, combativ, agresiv chiar, destul de informat,

dar mai ales dialectic, inepuizabil dialectic, luminat totuși de o candoare plăcută cu deosebire femeilor, de o frăgezime de impresie binevenită într-o societate, prin conveniențe, mai mult receptivă decât deliberativă. Și cum ne aflăm pe atunci într-o fază poetică, cu valuri de versuri, prezența scriitorului era și mai binevenită prin simțul critic al poeziei, destul de rar, simț, firește, de poet, adică unilateral, în sensul formulei proprii, dar rapid; după o singură aruncare de privire peste un manuscris, el își formula părerea, precisă, categorică, definitivă, dacă nu și întemeiată, reversibilă la o concepție hotărâtă, cu o reacțiune unică, adică esența însăși a autorității critice, ajutată și de posibilitatea susținerii ei cu o pasiune rară în domeniul criticii, expus diletantismului unora și lașității de opinie a celor mai mulți”. The third moment of the portrait brings a change of tone and register to the phrase; the neutral posture is substituted here by the offensive assertion, by the incisive expression, underlining a non-idilic portrait of the author of *Jocul ielelor*, a play that illustrates, in Lovinescu’s view, some spiritual and intellectual failures of balance: „Din nu știu ce tenebre misterioase ale inconștientului s-a prăvălit, așadar, crescând, petricica abia pecrecptibilă la început, luând cu ea forțele reale ale acestei inteligențe vii și desfășurându-și episoadele pe un fond de beatitudine agresivă. Când strănută, Camil privește în jur cu satisfacția unei acțiuni inedite; orice ai face, a fost făcut mai întâi de dânsul și orice idei ai exprima, a fost exprimată de dânsul într-un vechi articol de cel puțin cinci ani. E nu numai cel dintâi în timp, dar și cel dintâi în valoare; e cel mai mare ziarist și polemist, e cel mai mare dramaturg și critic dramatic; e cel mai mare poet și critic literar, e omul cel mai inteligent – totul fără mlădiere, fără ușorul zâmbet de ironie sau glumă, sub faldurile căruia se strecoară ușure orice prezumție, ci categoric, definitiv, repetat pe un ton iritat, agresiv, dispus oricând să o dovedească dialectic și la nevoie să rupă relațiile personale (...). Articolele lui sunt totdeauna definitive: înalță sau scoboară, lansează sau distruge; în discuție are pentru orice o teorie, teoria chibritului, firește, nou-nouță, potrivit serviciului cauzei; lipsa unui nasture de la vestă se preface, astfel, după circumstanță, într-o necesitate cosmică sau într-un semn de superioritate intelectuală (...). Și ar fi și timpul ca omulețul acesta pripit, iritat, pururi grăbit, cu privirea în jos, ca și cum ar căuta ceva pierdut, cu podul palmei aprins, incendiat de febre, hărțăgos, plin de talent, dar și de fatuitate, să se oprească din cursa lui frenetică pentru a se regăsi pe sine și liniștea fără care nimeni nu se poate realiza desăvârșit”.

The portrait dedicated to Duiliu Zamfirescu is born of a „brutal incongruence” between the appreciation of the artist and the reserves favored by the focus on the “biographical ego”. The portrait starts, paradoxically, with a series of considerations on the artistic expression of Duiliu Zamfirescu’s prose: „Nu voi exalta în Duiliu Zamfirescu nici poetul, nici creatorul de viață, dar, după atâtea decenii de evoluție artistică, după apariția atâtor temperamente mari artistice, ce au schimbat aproape cu totul fața scrisului românesc – în anumitul sens al echilibrului clasic, stilul lui Duiliu Zamfirescu rămâne încă modelul cel mai realizat până acum al literaturii noastre. Un simț al formei precise, fără digresiuni și pitoresc voit, o eleganță ieșită din simplitate și din discreție, o reținere evidentă, un amestec judicios al limbii curente a omului de cultură generală, fără excese de specializare, cu neologisme și cu arhaisme venite la locul lor și topite într-o masă solubilă, un ton de detașare cuviincioasă față de obiect și de respect de sine și de cititor, o îmbinare de răceală aparentă și de pasiune conținută, o fluiditate ce nu se confundă cu ușurința și frivolitatea, fac din acest stil o operă de artă valabilă prin armonia și echilibrul ce respiră”.

Duiliu Zamfirescu’s portrait then develops by the evocation of the *man*, with certain disputable character features, with several vulnerable aspects of behavior, which disagree with Lovinescu’s ethic code. At the beginning, a presentation of the exterior profile of the author of

Viata la tara / Life in the Country is to be found: „Atletic, apolinic, de o frumusețe bărbătească, trăit foarte mulți ani în străinătate, din care vreo cincisprezece în Italia, în societatea internațională cea mai aleasă, cu un viu simț al artei și al naturei, de o mare cultură clasică, culeasă la înseși izvoarele ei, euristic în toată făptura lui fizică, artist echilibrat, măsurat în expresie, precis și elegant, fără a fi strict și limitat, cu acea discreție și rezervă de ton atât de prețioasă – spărgând simbioza cu artistul, omul în toate manifestările lui se arată lamentabil. Înfumurat, se lăuda, în polemicile cu d. Octavian Goga, că strămoșii săi erau mari învățați la Bizanț, într-o epocă în care strămoșii poetului nu se scoborâseră bine din maimuță; teatral, protector fără să i-o fi cerut, lipsit de nuanțele pe care le înmuia atât de bine în artă, insuportabil chiar când era binevoitor, protocolar, clătinându-se între aroganță și politeță vădit superioară, curtenitor cu femeile, serenissim cu oricine, în atitudine, în vorbă și tăcere. Iată contrastul dureros, divorțul aproape, între artist și om, ce m-a abătut repede de la priveliștea jalnică a acestei dezarmonii intime, iar, ca memorialist, mult mai târziu, m-a făcut să arunc vâlul biblic peste amintirea lui”.

At the end of the portrait, the diarist interprets objectively the correspondence between Duiliu Zamfirescu and Titu Maiorescu, where eminent qualities of the style (acute observation spirit, precision of expression, scenic representation, etc.) are found. Lovinescu underlines the artistic side of these letters, which, beyond their documentary aspect, have a rigorously fundamental expressive purpose: „Nu cred că depășesc adevărul afirmând că de abia o dată cu publicarea acestei corespondențe intră și arta epistolară ca gen special în literatura noastră. Scrisorile lui Duiliu Zamfirescu nu au numai scopul firesc de a informa, ci sunt și o operă de artă, lipsită însă de ostentația pe care o dă întotdeauna prezența publicului cititor. În ele găsim un om cult, în curent cu ce se publică în diverse literaturi, care trăiește în străinătate în contact continuu cu oameni de cultură, cu o sensibilitate artistică în toate domeniile, literatură, muzică, arte plastice, care călătorește mereu, știind să vadă, și care dorește să exprime ceea ce a simțit și văzut și, mai presus de orice, o face cu o artă de romancier în vacanță, fără încordare, dar cu aceeași armonie clasică a frazelor susținute din când în când de neprevăzutul cuvântului, al imaginii și de ferestrele deschise spre perspective fumurii. Artist complet, el nu-și pune arta numai în cărți, ci o trăiește, o manifestă în orice act cotidian și o exprimă în cele mai fugare rânduri trimise între două trenuri”. The revelation of Duiliu Zamfirescu’s mail correspondance is found by Lovinescu in the recovery of the balance between the man and the artist, in the clear expressivity and beauty of these pages: „Nu este o scrisoare, nu este un rând care să nu vădească nu numai frumusețea stilistică, ci și cea morală: siguranța atitudinii îmbinată dintr-o deferență afectuoasă, fără umbra îmbulzei sau slugărniciei, cu respectul demnității personale; o modestie față de toate încercările sale literare, ce se referă mereu la aprecierea criticului, fără să renunțe la afirmația individualității proprii; recurgera repetată la protecția omului politic, dar pe un ton strict, sobru, care caută totdeauna să pună chestiunea pe terenul dreptății și nu pe al serviciului personal sau al favoarei; o naturalitate de expresie, fără patetism, o omenie, ce știe să-și apere prietenii (Al. Vlahuță, I.N. Roman) față de asprimea criticului; o mare finețe și perspicacitate în a judeca pe vrăjmași (de pildă, pe Caragiale), o afecție luminoasă și caldă față de ai săi, de cămin, de socru-său, de nevastă-sa, de copii – într-un cuvânt desfășurarea, fără note false, a unei armonii sufletești, a unei delicateți, în nuanța ei cea mai anevoioasă, a respectului afectuos, fără abdicatie de sine – ne restabilesc imaginea echilibrului moral, dispărut în clipa când l-am cunoscut eu”.

Whether it is built of acceptance and praise or of reserve and negation, the style of E. Lovinescu’s portraits derives from concision and expressive refinement. It is, therefore, a classic style. The diarist is preoccupied not by the exactitude of his observation, but by the expressivity

of the phrase, by the sober authenticity of the notations, marked by distinction and fascination for the revelatory detail.

A lot of assertions about the destiny of the art and artist are to be found in Lovinescu's *Memories*. In these observations, the autobiographical discourse turns towards itself, receives a powerful auto-reflexive feature, interrogating itself about the chances art has to survive the erosion of time and history. An ethics of the creative act is obvious here, by the praise of art and the elimination of the contingent, by a sort of spiritual ascetism, that also contains a wave of skepticism necessary for an authentic situation in the time and space of the artistic phenomenon („Trebuie să fim conștienți de faptul că suntem o forță uriașă pentru că din materialul fragil al cuvintelor putem clădi construcții arhitectonice, ce vor încremeni mii de ani în amintirea oamenilor și nu se vor împrăști decât o dată cu specia, nu lucrăm numai dintr-o satisfacție imediată și dintr-un spirit de dominație temporară, ci pornim la cucerirea cerului și a veșniciei cu frânghia de mătase împletită a versului sau a gândului subtil și sonor; voim să ne prelungim ființa pieritoare prin eternitatea artei”). Obviously, Lovinescu's autobiographical discourse is not permanently equal, reducible to the significations of an apollinic spirit. We find here the state of emergency of a polemic spirit, with a remarkable ability of reaction, a spirit that is always on alert and which repudiates any kind of imperfection, discordance or disharmonies. Offensive and polemic, but also having the colors of skepticism and ironic relativity, the autobiographical discourse sometimes experiences an elegiac tendency, a diffuse and livresque lyricism.

In conclusion, we may say that E. Lovinescu's pages have a privileged place in Romanian diaristic literature, by the expressive resources they are based on, by the plasticity of the evoking portrait and by the appropriate tone, by the optimal dosage of social and psychological perception.

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GEORGE BACOVIA AND THE AVATARS OF DAMNATION

It has been stated that Bacovia is rather a particular type of symbolist poet – a “primitive” one (according to N. Manolescu) –, than a pure symbolist, due to the fact that he no longer employs the sophisticated, refined techniques of the symbolist movement and to his usage of a much more “realistic” language, attempting to “un-poetize” the poetry. Noticing the “reduction” phenomena that symbolist techniques are subjected to, Mircea Scarlat believes that the term “bacovianism” would be appropriate to circumscribe this profoundly original poetic universe. Surprisingly, one may state that it is the simplicity of the poetic utterance that confers refinement to this type of poetry; this poetry features an entirely natural language, as the poet doesn’t appear to poetically translate impressions, but only to confess, his writing becoming, accordingly, a form of direct communication with the reader. One may notice, as Constantin Ciopraga writes, that “*it is neither the plasticity of the forms, nor the chromaticity that creates artistic images, as the poet captures the vibration, the rhythm of an interior moment very much like the impressionists*”. Bacovia’s visual images are transmitted in a synesthetic register, creating sonic echoes. For instance, in *Marș funebru / Funeral March*, the autumn background incorporates some of the tragic nostalgia expressed by Chopin’s music, just as in *Nervi de primăvară / Spring nervousness*, the visual and the other senses melt together, since the landscape becomes “*o pictură parfumată / cu vibrații de violet*”. But Bacovia’s confession in *Plumb / Lead*, *Amurg violet / Violet Twilight* or *Plumb de iarnă / Winter Lead* is not focused on the accessories, on the insignificant details, but rather on the inner essences. Thus, the data of the landscape are transgressed into the space of the consciousness, and reality resonates in the imagery, just as the specificity of the Bacovian landscapes does not come from the summing of plastic details, but from the drawing of a particular environment. Rain, wind, lead, the rhythm of the seasons, do not signify anything by themselves, while they evoke, through suggestion, a certain interior climate, a synthetic impression. As Constantin Ciopraga remarks, “*the lack of artificiality, in the case of a solemn and lucid artist, seems to be an effect of spontaneity, but Bacovia operates in his poems with unbelievable perseverance. His classic sobriety and the ability to extract the essential are achieved through his struggle with matter and its drama. The denuded lines, the silenced emotions, the current epithets – they all prove his repulsion to a grandiloquent style*”. If in Bacovia’s earlier poems there was an obstacle between poetry and reality, built by conventionalism, as well as a sort of artificiality of the vision, later he develops a reflex of the mundane and a complete equivalence is set between poetry and existence. *Stante burgheze / Bourgeois Stamps* (consisting of the poetry written between 1950 and 1957) features such a total insertion of the reality’s data in the text. The poet’s biographic identity is directly expressed by his poetic one. Nevertheless, Bacovia’s poetry is based on denying the concept of absolute, since the metaphysical is assimilated to desolation and total emptiness.

In his book *Bacovia. Ruptura de utopia romantica / The Separation from Romantic Utopia*, V. Fanache defines the poet’s status in the Romanian poetic landscape: “*Bacovia interrupts, in the development of our poetry, the poetic discourse that acts certain of self-overcome. He is characterized by his separation from illusion and romantic dreaming or of the chimeric symbols meant to suggest the cosmic mystery. There is no programmatic intention able to save the poetic self as it falls in the lead of concrete reality. Having been drained of illusion, his poetry is no longer the former state of charm, the incantatory ecstasy; it becomes the sound made by his irreversible self-destruction. What separates Bacovia from the romantic utopia is the fact that in his*

text there is no sign of salvation (redemption) neither in life, nor in death, and there is magical compensating land, be it the past or the oneirism, the cosmos, history or the eros". By such a perfect lucidity, Bacovia becomes our contemporary, the first Romanian postmodernist consciousness.

Bacovia's poetry is, first of all, the poetry of the environment, where the evoking frame reveals an acute sensitivity to the "stimuli" of reality. It is, as Lovinescu notices, an environment "of overwhelming desolation, of rotten rains in the autumn an gangrened trees, limited to the landscape of the provincial city's slum, between the cemetery and the slaughter house, with small houses buried in eternal mud, with a ravaged public garden, with the melancholy and joy of the panoramas where "princesses sigh mechanically in glass scrapes"; and in this environment of lead there is an identical state of mind; *muză*, a complete chaos of the soul through the obsession of death and nothingness, a vague trivial sentimentalism (...)".

Published in 1916 in a homonym book, *Plumb / Lead* is, probably, the most read and quoted of Bacovia's poems. I am not sure whether, in spite of all its interpretations, it is also his best understood. In this representative poem, the poet configures, in the minimal and iterative way that is so characteristic to him, a reality that is primarily psychological, since the chromatic suggestions, the hard, gnashed musicality, bring us face to face with the interior universe of the poet, a traumatized universe, disharmonious and alienated in its relationship with the exterior world. Obviously, one may find here, in the whole symbolist-expressionist poetics of Bacovia, his manner of representing the world and of drawing his own emotions in the lines, a certain unmistakable style that had imposed him in the history of Romanian poetry. *Plumb / Lead* is, in other words, a programmatic poem, since it reflects a manner of writing and way of sensing the data of reality in the poetic expression. Bacovia's poetry is structured as an elegiac monologue, dominated by the sensation of absurdity and by a tragic atmosphere of twilight. These are related to Bacovia's enormous sensibility, a sensibility to the most subtle nuances of the mechanics of light, as well as to the smallest acuteness of the universal becoming.

On the conceptual plan, Bacovia's poem imagines an alienating and restrictive universe, lacking any sign of ideality, where the poetic self feels an intense loss of identity, with himself and the others, as well as the inability of existing authentically. *Caderea / The downfall* is, as V. Fanache writes, the key-word of Bacovia's poetry, a paradigmatic word for the ontological and poetical representation of the author: "Wherever we may cut a sequence and regardless of its relation to cosmic matter, the human spectacle or the poetic self, beyond the textual scenery there is always, as a *fatum*, the downfall. The sliding, the disappearance, the gliding, the decline, the decay, the loss of the self into mute alienation or in roaring madness, the sinking in the emptiness that "gathers everything", like an insatiable pit – these are all the metaphorical faces of the same fall, active everywhere, as if it would correspond to a common symbolic feature of the language: all that may be imagined in speech develops as a failure". In *Plumb*, the trajectory of the poetic images also has a declining meaning, the axis of the poetry has no signs of ascension but, on the contrary, very clear accents of regression, downfall, alienation and mineralization – all bringing on the poetic stage the demonism of death, the suggestion of extinction and of unbearable inertia.

The key-words that mark the data of this poetic universe are *lead*, *tomb* and *alone*. These are words that suggest a total, tragic solitude of the lyrical self, an essential loneliness that places him beyond things and people, a metaphysical space where the *being* finds the fundamental isolation in front of the limitless world and locks himself in his own feelings. It might be that this terror of the infinity and of a frightening world (by the lack of landmarks) actually leads the poetic self to a retractile attitude, to the reclusion into closed spaces like the tomb. *The tomb* is, if we attempt a psychoanalytical approach, a symbol of *ad uterum* regression, by which we may understand the poetic self's retreat in a protecting space, away from the aggression of the exterior, oppressing

and meaningless exterior world. Another interpretation may stress the restrictive, Procrustean dimensions of some spatial symbols like the *tomb* or the *coffin*. We may consider that all these minimal spaces, where the self discovers isolation and amputation of ideals are as many spaces of downfall, alienation, pressure and damnation. In such a view, the poem is structured in a centripetal vision, where the signifying energies gather in a point of convergence, focusing in a semantic center of pure negative emergence. Among the elements that prove this fact are the words with an obvious funeral resonance that are present here (coffins, funeral, tomb, dead, lead) sending us to a world of closure, cloistering, lack of existential horizon and, eventually, to an infernal space with minimal, mortifying dimension. The poetic pretext lies in the loss of the loved-one (of the lover), because, unlike romantic poetry, in the case of Bacovia, and especially in *Plumb / Lead* love loses and mark of ideality, any utopian contour, becoming mechanical and reified, and turns into an alienating sensation of downfall, of frozen turmoil or mineralized, fruitless passion. From such an angle, *Plumb / Lead* is the epilogue of a lost love ((“Dormea întors amorul meu de plumb”), a love that no longer offers the chance of redemption, the context of evasion from the constraining space of the cemetery, of the tomb or the coffin.

The essential solitude of the poetic self, marked by the repeated expression “*stam singur / I was standing alone*” is amplified by the obsessive representation of the minimal spatial frame, proving to be alienating and restrictive, but also by the sensation of coldness, recorded in hallucinatory images. Between the interior space, where there is agonizing pain, metaphysical sadness and almost physiological suffering and the exterior background ravaged by wind and cold, the poem establishes a relation of total correspondence. The interior and the exterior communicate and accentuate their echoes; on one hand the vision is reduced to the minimal state of a soul that is enchained by own obsession and visions of the nonexistence and on the other the poet sets on stage a background marked by solitude and hard pressure, monotony and acute desolation. The lead, the key-word of the poem, repeated three times in each stanza, becomes a metaphor and, at the same time, a symbol for an inner reality that is devastated by anxiety and by an emphasized feeling of the nothingness. The poet suggests here the lack of horizon and an inner feeling of downfall, of being crushed by the limits of his too-human nature. What might the last line suggest (“*Si-i atarnau aripele de plumb / And his leaded winged were hanging*”) other than the fact that the very image of flight is declining and illusory, impossible to accomplish. Flight is an amputated exaltation, a “reverted” ascension made not towards the heights but towards the depths, ending in the abyssal areas of the self, where there is nothing but anguish and neurosis. Thus, broken between the futility of ascension and the awareness of damnation, the poet only senses the abusive exterior reality as well as the interior reality which is devastated by disillusion and by the feeling of nothingness.

Also published in the first volume of poetry, *Plumb / Lead* (1916), the poem *Lacustra / Lacustral* contains the same obsessions of a poetic self which is overwhelmed by solitude and diffuse desperation. The poet feels like the universe, in its crushing immensity, abolishes his existence, his feelings, his individuality, amputating his identity, dissolving it in a precarious reality with no exact determinations. The atmosphere of the poetry results precisely from such a spatial and temporal undetermination. “*Plansul materiei / The crying of matter*” should be seen as a manner of representing the deep substrate of the world; this is a pre-formal reality or a super-formal, original, one, developing its identity and, at the same time, its transposition in the various modalities of existence. It is a fact noticed, among others, by V. Fanache, who writes: “*Who is the “matter” whose cry is heard by the poet? We are dealing, like in other Bacovian texts, with a generalizing image,*

summarizing and transcending into a super-reality of the various forms of existence. “Aud material plângând / I hear the matter crying” names an original entity beyond the world and beyond the human being, from which derives any state of being – the existence in actu (...) The voice heard by the poet comes from the profound interiority of the universe, it is a sign of the essence revealed in and by the lines of the poem, an essence called, in Bacovia’s language, cry”.

There is, therefore, a metaphysical “cry”, a suffering of matter as it reveals its precarity and dissolution under rain and water. As a matter of fact, unlike the romantic poets, who saw water as a beneficial and purifying element, Bacovia gives it an evil force with destructive marks. The whole universe is under the threat of extinction, the world is in an obvious decay and matter caves in its forms, its structure, its natural state. In such a context, even the human being no longer feels that nature is “habitable” but, on the contrary, feels more and more threatened, subject to a rising crisis of communication – with the self and with the exteriority. The poet’s solitude, his extreme isolation, brings the impression of an immemorial time, which lacks, just like the aquatic space, any certain, comforting landmarks. “The lacustral habitats” accentuate this desolating poetic landscape of the human facing the aggressive, unacceptable natural elements. Humidity and the aquatic are omnipresent here, suggesting the dissolution of things and beings under the domination of the destructive water, the liquefying of stable forms, the extinction under the sign of the terrorizing rain. Even the sleep turns into a nightmare, maintaining the anguish in front of the unleashed forces of matter and generating the human being’s horror of a degenerating matter: “De-atâtea nopți aud plouând,/ Aud materia plângând.../ Sunt singur și mă duce-un gând/ Spre locuințele lacustre./ / Și parcă dorm pe scânduri ude,/ În spate mă izbește-un val -/ Tresar prin somn și mi se pare/ Că n-am tras podul de la mal”. The exterior painting of an unleashed nature finds a correspondent in the inner being, also ravaged and without an protection, seeking refuge in a self which is threatened by desegregation and alienation.

The “historic emptiness” suggests the exit from time, the metaphysical un-temporality of the human being’s position in the universe. The Bacovian man is irreparably alone; he is, after all, an archetype of the eternal man, having broken any social bound and any historical determination. On the other hand, the image of the lacustral shelter threatened by the fury of the waters leads us to the hypothesis of a continuing downfall of the human being, a slow slide into nothingness, the nothingness of the waters and at the same tie the inner nothingness. The dissolution of matter corresponds, thus, to a desegregation of the human being, who finds its very structure under the threat of an uncontrollable, demonic nature. The auditory senses (“*aud plouând / I hear the rain*”, “*aud material plângând / I hear the matter crying*”) are combined here in order to accentuate the suggestion of the nothingness, of vacuity, of outside threat, of water’s demonic fury. This is, as Florin Mihailescu was pointing out, in a most certain way, the triumph of matter over the metaphysical dimension, since the state of anguish and uncertainty comes from “*the inability to adapt to social structures based on the triumph of materiality over ideality in human relations, which explains the persistence of the existential symbol of human precarity and perpetual threat as well as, in a compensating way, the presence of a latent, sometimes rebellious aspiration*”.

Bacovia excels, in *Lacustră / Lacustral*, as well as in other representative poems, in his ability to suggest extreme inner states, their great ontological and emotional impact, and this is accomplished mostly by recording sensations. The feeling of human precarity, of perishability is recored by the spectacle of an unstable matter, which is perpetually fluent, water symbolizing here erosion, instability, evanescence: “Un gol istoric se întinde,/ Pe-aceleași vremuri mă găsesc.../ Și simt cum de atâtea ploaie/ Piloții grei se prăbușesc./ / De-atâtea nopți aud plouând,/ Tot tresărind, tot așteptând.../

Sunt singur și mă duce-un gând/ Spre locuințele lacustre?. A poem about the alienation of the human being in front of the elemental nature, *Lacustra / Lacustral* is at the same time a poem about the essential solitude of the human in a hostile universe lacking any reason, an absurd universe which no longer answers his calls and where the human is unable to find himself or to find his genuine inner identity, his authentic inner structure.

Similarly, Bacovia's erotic feeling carry obvious negative connotations, like in the case of any great symbolist or decadent poet. If for the romantics love was projected on an ideal horizon of accomplishment and retrieval of the original, for the symbolists love is convulsive, marked by neurosis and alienation. Symbolist-decadent love does not unite, it separates two sensibilities and two human beings, it does not transfigure the feeling but mutilates it as the self is ravaged by the terrorizing history, time and his own nothingness. Symbolist poetry and Bacovia's poetry in particular no longer gives love any chance of affective salvation, any ability to transgress an ontologically inconsistent reality. A poem like *Decembre / December* is somehow an exception, as it draws the eros from a new angle and creates a new conception on love. *Decembre / December* is a poem of intimacy and communion, with the two protagonists lying under the sign of winter. But the snow does not possess, in this case, the apocalyptic effects from other Bacovian poems. It rather has an ornamental purpose, representing a background for the gracious spectacle of love.

Like in some of Alecsandri's *pasteluri / paintings* we see, in this poem, the establishment of an antinomy between the exterior and the interior; the element on the outside is put in opposition with the security, comfort and harmony of the inner space of the room. *The room* is a protective place, securing the communion between the two beings lying under the beneficial signs of the eros. Love is transformed into a gracious ritual, with imponderable gestures and ceremonial postures creating the impression of a Botticellian love. There is no trace here of the "reverted" love with funeral connotations but, rather, a spiritualized love and, at the same time, a release from any anguish, with all the features of exaltation and intimacy.

The sublimity, the suavity of the Eminescian feeling of love is found here unaltered, in a poem where discretion, the magic of the lines and the almost transcendental clarity of the atmosphere produce a feeling of reconciliation and inner harmony. The everyday gestures, the familiar objects – suggest this type of love ritual where the inner atmosphere is drawn in exact but vague lines, in the dimmed colors of a gracious restrain to the infinitesimal nuances. The sounds are, nevertheless, minimal, and the gestures seem to be incomplete, and there is a slowness of the movements which imprints on the poem the ceremonial air of a sublime, simple and suave eros: "Te uită cum ninge decembre/ Spre geamuri, iubito, privește -/ Mai spune s-aducă jăratec/ Și focul s-aud cum trosnește.// Și mână fotoliul spre sobă,/ La horn să aud vijelia,/ Sau zilele mele – tot una -/ Aș vrea să le-nvăț simfonia.// Mai spune s-aducă și ceaiul,/ Și vino și tu mai aproape; -/ Citește-mi ceva de la poluri,/ Și ningă... zăpada ne-ngroape".

An oneiric environment is configured here, the human beings and things losing their corporality and their gestures transgressing the concreteness of the world, as the environment itself becomes hallucinatory and unreal. This impression of an oneiric environment of the erotic feeling is due to the presence of verbs at the imperative or conjunctive ("te uită" / "look", "privește" / "watch", "spune" / "say", "s-aud" / "let me hear", "mână" / "push", "să ascult" / "let me listen"), all of them placing the actions in a sort of temporal undetermination, transposing them in the field of ideality and dreaming. Heats, as well as the visual sense of darkness, the cold outside and the fire in the room collaborate to create an ambiance that unites the two lovers. The textual structure, as well as the semantic dynamics of the poem, consists in a dialectics of

approach and removal, of interior and exterior, realities that give dynamicity to each other's meanings and suggestions: "Ce cald e aicea la tine,/ Și toate din casă mi-s sfinte; -/ Te uită cum ninge decembrie.../ Nu râde... citește-nainte./ E zăuă și ce întuneric.../ Mai spune s-aducă și lampa -/ Te uită, zăpada-i cât gardul,/ Și-a prins promoroacă și clampa./ Eu nu mă mai duc azi acasă.../ Potop e-napoi și-nainte,/ Te uită cum ninge decembrie,/ Nu râde... citește-nainte". In no other poem does Bacovia invest the feeling of love with such a purifying and elevated meaning. In the evoking and harmonious, protective space of the room, a true ritual of communion and love takes place, in delicacy and fascinating contemplation of the unleashed nature from the outside.

Like almost all the symbolist poets, Bacovia was attracted to the magic of correspondence and the techniques of synesthesia. In Rimbaud's spirit, the Romanian poet gives colors certain meanings, associates them to emotions, reveals them in a novel way. The gray, the black, the violet, the yellow, loose their status of simple chromatic reflexes, becoming emotions. It was no coincidence that Mihail Petroveanu called Bacovia: "*Composer in speech and painter in words*". We should add that for Bacovia the painted color is not decorative; even if, in a first stage, the colors create an environment, configure a background, in a second stage (when the poetic vision is structured) the colors are transposed in a register of pure sensitiveness, their connotations being various inner states. The variety of colors Bacovia works with is small, as a consequence of the small number of feelings suggested by the poet (the spleen, the sadness, the anguish, the loneliness, the monotony, etc.). Melancholy, for instance, is suggested by the sound of the violin and of the piano, while the neurosis is recorded in the green color, blue or pink, as well as by the musical sounds of the violin and the flute.

Nicolae Manolescu underlines Bacovia's predilection – an almost obsessive predilection – for suggestive colors: "*Violet, black, white, pink – these colors invade things like some physical presences, they erode the characters or stain them. The poet seems to apply the paint on the canvas directly from the tube or with the edge of the knife. And these paints are sometimes hallucinatory because of their intensity*". A representative poem for such a technique of synesthesia is *Amurg violet / Violet Sunset*. The poem's chromaticity is monotonous, and the intensification of the sensation is achieved by the obsessive repetition of the color *violet*. The poetic scenery is drawn schematically, from a few lines, the space consists of minimal details and landmarks, and thus the background is ruled by total austerity and simplicity. But the violet is the color that favors a certain equivoque, a semantic ambiguity, giving the poetic representation an almost fantastic accent. It is as if beyond the present reality the poet senses a different one, extremely close but at the same time of a fantastic, illusory almost sacred nature ("*Amurg de toamnă violet.../ Doi plopi, în fund, apar în siluete:/ Apostoli în odăjdii violete -/ Orașul tot e violet./ / Amurg de toamnă violet.../ Pe drum e-o lume leneșă, cochetă;/ Mulțimea toată pare violetă,/ Orașul tot e violet*"). In the last stanza the sensation of fantasy, of retreat in an illusory past is even more obvious. The poet leaves the frame and the present time, in order to evade into the space of an immemorial past, favored by the world's invasion by violet. From his privileged position ("from the tower"), allowing him to see the panorama of the landscape, the poet witnesses a fall back into history or a descent of the history, of the mythical, in the daily reality: "*Amurg de toamnă violet.../ Din turn, pe câmp, văd voievozi cu plete;/ Străbunii trec în pâlcuri violete,/ Orașul tot e violet*".

The sunset, a moment of the day that favors the insertion of a fantastic shiver, as well as the violet, leads to a hallucinating vision in which the prosaic reality loses its pregnancy, its force, being transfigured into myth and almost mystical illusion. A mournful, neurotic environment, marked by the spleen is also contoured in the poem *Plumb de toamnă / Autumn Lead*. The poet lives in a world with mechanical articulations, lacking any authentic existential thrill, where

reification subdues any form of vitality. Close in the constraining space of the market town, the poet is overwhelmed with anxiety and with the awareness that life is nothing but an “error” and the transcendence is absent. The province is drawn here not only in a purely spatial or geographical way, but also receives ontological connotations: the human subject is situated *at the margin* and has a nostalgia of the center, of the origin, but his precarious condition refuses any chance of evasion, of transcending what is an exclusive and terrorizing *given*.

In a commentary, V. Fanache emphasizes the demonic features of this space where the human being lies in the periphery of the existence and the poet is doomed, exiled in an alienating world: “*Similar to that of the Gnostics, the vision of the world in Plumb de toamna seems to be ruled by Satan and, therefore, it is an empire of evil, “a deserted province” deserted by the divine spirit, because it is damned for anyone – the young girl, the pale dreamer, the anxious madman, the “forgotten” lover, the poet himself – “any hope is lost”. Placed somewhere far away or maybe nowhere, the existential remedy is unreachable for the human being, whose essential nature is doomed to ontological provinciality. The space of the market town reveals its signs that have been emptied of meaning (...)*”.

The evil is an almighty presence in these lines. The images of death are numerous, repeated with obsessive persistence. Death, madness, loss of hope and loss of the self in an off-centered space – are all images of the evil that possesses the poetic self, making it captive in a space without horizon or any certain landmarks, a prisoner of his own consuming discomfort: “*De-acum, tușind, a mai murit o fată,/ Un palid visător s-a împușcat;/ E toamnă și de-acuma s-a-nnoptat.../ - Tu ce mai faci, iubita mea uitată?/ Într-o grădină publică, tăcută,/ Pe un nebun l-am auzit răcnind,/ Iar frunzele cu droaia se desprind/ E vânt și-orice speranță e pierdută/ Prin târgu-nvăluit de sărăcie/ Am întâlnit un popă, un soldat.../ De-acum pe cărți voi adormi uitat,/ Pierdut într-o provincie pustie*”. The end of the poem transposes the reader in a sort of explanation of the nature of the alienation, by the “social evil” and the “forgotten love” points to the indetermination of the background, projecting the answer in nostalgia and in the inconsistency of the past: (“*De-acum, au și pornit pe lumea eronată/ Ecouri de revoltă și de jale;/ Tot mai citești probleme sociale.../ Sau, ce mai scrii, iubita mea uitată?*”).

There is nothing random in the title of the poem *Scenery*. The poet draws an urban scenery in the hibernal ambiance, a scenery marked by the image of the park and of the white and black trees. In the structure of the poetic vision, we may see an alternation of static and dynamic, of movement and rest. Thus, the quatrains record, to the highest degree, the sensation of astonishment, of inertia, while the isolated lines produce a certain impression of movement, of dynamicity. The alternation between white and black brings the loudness and the contrast between the two colors with their particular symbolism: white would suggest life, a mineralized life, in hibernation, while black would connote the nothingness and death. In spite of the pregnancy of the images, Bacovia’s poem is not a lyrical painting. The scenery, the description, the figuration of the landscape are not the purposes of his poetry, but pretexts for the suggestion of inner states, for the recording of emotions. It is what Nicolae Manolescu has also noticed: “*Even from the first reading we see that some formulas are repeated, in a certain order and that the representation of the winter landscape is powerfully stylized. The painting of nature’s emaciation is accomplished by the alternation of white and black. The mimesis is, at first, perceivable. The first line may be read referentially: the white and black trees are the leafless trees, like they were carbonized, covered in snow. But the repetition of the pattern (in lines 6 and 11) attacks the impression of true description, even by the fact that the expansion of the white-black opposition to other aspects of the reality (the bird’s feathers, the leaves) brings in a criterion of artificial similarity: intuition is annoyed by very simple code of colors used by the poet. We realize that he is not actually describing the*

landscape, but organizing it according to two opposite features, white and black, that have nevertheless strict correspondences in the reality”.

The environment built by the author in the *Scenery* is of a complete austerity. The natural elements are of extreme simplicity, associated to states of mind that are also single-stringed: sadness, melancholy, solitude. The repetition of particular words and formulas is meant to intensify the emotion, to emphasize even more the experiences and to press the accents on one or the other of the poetic scenery's elements. The lyrical or structural symmetries and correspondences are almost identical, which allows them to amplify the impression of monotony, of undifferentiation that the poet tries to communicate: (“Copacii albi, copacii negri/ Stau goi în parcul solitar:/ Decor de doliu, funerar.../ Copacii albi, copacii negri (...) Și frunze albe, frunze negre;/ Copacii albi, copacii negri;/ Și pene albe, pene negre,/ Decor de doliu, funerar...”). The median quatrain brings, in the astonished winter landscape a certain dynamicity, a sensation of movement that is more emphasized (“Cu pene albe, pene negre/ O pasăre cu glas amar/ Străbate parcul secular.../ Cu pene albe, pene negre”).

A poetry focused on the antinomies of a nature the expresses powerful inner contrasts, *Bacovia's lyric* reveals the whole variety of procedures and techniques featured by symbolism. But Symbolism passes, through the styling and crisping of sensitiveness, through the austerity of the landscape and turns into Expressionism, as it reveals the artistic valences of one of the most genuine Romanian poets. An „error” placed in an „wrong world”, the being has the premonition of downfall, as well as the clear awareness of damnation, of alienation from the self and the world. Alienation, evil, neurosis, reification – are the obsessive thematic markers of this poetry that has a mournful background, painted in the colours of melancholy and desperation.

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THE SPACE OF THE CITY BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY. MATEIU I. CARAGIALE

The town of Bucharest in Romania has gathered a multitude of nationalities, habits, and cultures. It lies at the far east end of the Occident and at the gates of the Levant. Its literary geography has been shaped in extremely different ways by Romanian writers throughout the time. Mateiu I. Caragiale offers us an altogether genuine transcription of this reality, both geographical and anthropological. But before proceeding to study Bucharest's representations, it's duly right to point out how his father, I. L. Caragiale depicted it, having thus the same image in parallel mirrors. While I. L. Caragiale's work is characterized by objectivity, typicality, and critical elements, Mateiu I. Caragiale's work is full of romantic and symbolic elements, together with some suggestions at reality.

I. L. Caragiale is an urban writer who evoked the old structure of Bucharest with an unmatched conspicuousness. His city was of a picturesque suggested by an architectural disorder, by the improvised aspect of the streets in the shape of a maze, a maze with redundant significance, deprived of any symbolic aura. Bucharest, in his many descriptions found in sketches and plays, offers the image of an "itinerary full of surprises and traps, with thresholds, locked gates and insuperable board fences, uneven ground with missing stairs – an image of the crooked City, geography of a confused and chaotic world where everything is 'in a hurry' and 'of low quality'", as Maria Voda Capusan notices. So that a precarious and disintegrating socio-ethical mixture matches with a commensurate architectural "organization", the chaotic Bucharest with its pathetically situated slums in an everlasting and total disorder.

The random, confused and senseless tectonic of this labyrinthine space embodied by the Bucharest slum, where scaffoldings, dead ends, locked doors make any orientation impossible, is best rendered by Rica Venturiano's lamentation in act 2, scene VIII from the play *A Stormy Night*, where the personage remembers his tragic-comic situation of a ridiculous Tezeus, trying to overcome the initializing burdens trapped by the slum, lacking Ariadna's saving thread (here Zita). "I'm safe so far! Saint Andrew, please help me from now on too: I'm still in my youth! ...Oh, what a stormy night! Horrible tragedy! And so eventful!...I get out through the window and set out groping for my way on the scaffoldings! I lean myself against the wall and get to the end. But the implacable destiny persecutes me...The scaffoldings lead nowhere; not any stairs...The treacherous lady misled me... I want to go back and all of a sudden I hear my enemies coming in front of me on the scaffoldings. I turn back without knowing where I'm going; I stumble against a barrel of cement...Inspiration... - I, being a poet, never lack inspiration! – I hide in the barrel! The steps of my enemies are drawing closer quickly, many people are going past my barrel calling names; I, as an educated young man, pretend not to hear...everybody goes away...I hear a noise, women screaming, a gun shot eventually. The noise then dies down, everything is in dismal silence, only from afar, I hear the Establishment clock striking twenty past eleven...fatal hour for me! I sneak out of the barrel, crawl on all fours on the scaffoldings and found myself here again!"

Besides this derisive, unsuccessful journey through the maze of the slum, we also distinguish in Rica Venturiano's monologue a sum of strange, unusual "voices" of a solemnity

and “majesty” unjustified during those moments of panic. This solemnity doubled by ridicule makes Rica Venturiano a mythological hero *à rebours*, a masquerade actor which takes farce for tragedy, mixing up the tragic and the comic, handling the linguistic registers wrongly and, either because of his mental confusion due to the scare, or because of a wrong logical distribution of his status, utters sentences totally inadequate to the context. This character reminds us of Durrell’s Scobie.

The urban geography of Bucharest is painted by Mateiu I. Caragiale with a more magical colour, half fantastic, half real. In *The Philanderers* the contours of houses, cafes or churches get a halo of secrecy and dreaming, poetry and imaginary through that unexhausted preference for antiquity, history, genealogy that accompany his esthetics.

“Vivid embodiment of the very filthy and infamous soul of Bucharest”, Pirgu maintains the high spirits, retails news and latest gossip, ties and unties marriages, converses, providing a party-like atmosphere, making a tireless and gregarious, superficial and cheap comedian. He resembles in a way Mnemjian, who was the omniscient soul of Alexandria. “He [Mnemjian] is the Memory man, the archives of the city.” (*Justine* 1969: 32)

Mateiu I. Caragiale makes use of fantasy and aesthetics, his work dealing with destinies not through the plot or conflicts, but mostly through the suggestion of some atmosphere, the refined poetry of the past, the art of remembrance. From here derives this mixture of genres, impossible to rigorously frame in an aesthetic pattern. His work often trespasses literary rules and defines itself through resorting to its own configuration, its inner pulse.

The journey “in the life that is lived, and not that is dreamed of”, is not less invested with the magical signs of remoteness, of mystification through dreaming (“How many a time have I thought of living in a dream”). Wandering through Bucharest, the Philanderers, guided by Gore Pirgu, go through an infernal labyrinth; the journey now loses any purifying scope; moreover, it tends to exhaust a space of debauchery and corruption. These nightly pilgrimages also include a carnival atmosphere and a suggestion of stage acting. (The same carnival atmosphere, but with deadly results is found in *Justine*.) The duality of the Philanderers is more forceful now, when their nocturnal souls definitely overwhelm the daily ones.

The journey in the past and in the exotic is not so antinomic with the journey in reality, in the world that “is lived”. The reality in which the characters act is so hallucinating that it loses its concrete elements, attaching to itself delirious and fabulous signs. In fact, the Philanderers go down to an imaginary and inconsistent reality, a thrilling infra-reality, a world of pure abasement and ultimate grotesque. The present time, chaotic and senseless, an absurd concatenation of moments, is a time of an upside down history. The author shapes a lower world expressed by the Arnoteni’s world, a space of disjunction, inarticulate, and superlative degradation. The symbolical journey of the Philanderers tries to overpass its own limits, being the expression of the same “instinct of wandering”, a trial of the existential ordeal, but also of the need for freedom, for regaining identity, after many roundabouts and alien embodiments.

Mateiu I. Caragiale’s work is ultimately a prose of the ego, of the human being that is feverishly searching for itself through the adventure of remembrance and dreamy game, through hovering in the highest sheen of the spirit or through hopping in the lowest layers of abjection. Figuration becomes thus the image of the buffoon from the narrator’s final dream, the expression of a changing ego, ambiguous and evanescent, who uses his successive masks as ephemeral identities.

Mask, mirror and the aesthetics of the exception are joined by another motif, a highly mannerist one, the labyrinth. The exterior labyrinth of the bustle of streets, cafes and lanes of Bucharest corresponds symmetrically to an inner labyrinth. The characters' souls are the scene of a harsh encounter between contrary impulses, as Mateiu I. Caragiale's heroes eloquently illustrate the mannerist formula *concordia discors*. Dual natures provided with extremely minute obsessions are the landmarks of their own agonizing condition, and the feeling of absurd absorbs them, with their decadent, withered and impersonal gestures.

The centre of this infernal labyrinth is the Arnoteni's world – exacerbation of apocalypse and moral chaos, perversion and decomposition. The writer describes in detail their house, which in itself "seemed profligate": "an old body of a square building with a single row was added later slantingly a loose and narrow tail with two storeys, left unplastered and windowless in the unstable corridor which tied it up from one end to the other, leading to a kind of wooden tower patched with tin and sheltering the stairs. This ramshackle old house, which during the day was not noticed, gained, in the moonlight, something secretive and I just stopped to look at it when suddenly I startled shivering. You could hear from the inside a long, lugubrious howl, a bark that didn't seem to be of a dog."

In contrast with the common image of the labyrinth, here the centre does not have saving connotations, it does not purify, but it is the full expression of failure and moral degradation. The characters of this space – Mima, Tita, Maiorica, Sultana – are the representatives of a damned and unbalanced world. The decline of an aristocratic stock is paralleled by the total decline of an infernal and majesty-lacking world, where the deepest moral obscurity is lurking.

The more noble and lofty the style used by the author was in the first two pilgrimage descriptions, the more violent and excessively negative vein is the language used in depicting the Arnoteni's environment. The piety and the magnificent recollection of remoteness, the sumptuous contemplation of history are replaced by a description void of any metaphysical thrill of the vicinity, of a Balkan Bucharest and its devilish centre, the Arnotenis.

In the narrator's attitude towards the Arnoteni's house there is a mixture of horror and fascination. Abjection is felt by the Philanderers in two complementary ways: as repulsion and temptation. The same dual attitude, of disgust and attraction, is felt by the Philanderers against Pirgu, who is burdened with most of the negative traits. Pirgu gets the moral sanction from the author more because he has low origins than due to his perverse nature.

In conclusion we can say that Mateiu I. Caragiale describes the picturesque geography of Bucharest as half magical, half real, having symbolical connotation and from time to time demonical, a labyrinth with lost myths and meanings.

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IDENTITY AND RUPTURE IN E. CIORAN'S WORK

Exile and melancholy

Considering that Cioran's work "shows a surprising consistency of themes and attitudes", Sorin Alexandrescu, in a chapter of *Looking back, modernity*, does nothing but to state the essential feature of the thinker: the constancy in scriptural reactions, the permanently renewed persistence to designate the same themes of meditation, the relevance of a style that is equal to itself, recurrent, refusing any avatar, a monadic style, and equally open to a plurality of readings. It is also known that Cioran's work is only a sum of parts, devoid of any willingness/will of construction, fragments "built" deliberately in this way, from the philosopher's repulsion to any system, to any ontological or epistemological authority, either manifested in the real world, or materialized in a world of ideas. The freedom of association, the very subtle taste for the paradox, the ideation deprived of morgue confer to Cioran's phrase its inner tension, its dynamism of living and utterance. One may also say that between Cioran's biography and writing there are numerous bridges, lineages, links, either subtle, implicit or more apparent. Hence, from this parallelism biography / writing results the thematic dichotomy that always pursued Cioran, history and utopia are dichotomous ambivalences that feed, with increased energy, the philosopher's substance/essence. Always ruined before a hysterical history, utopia is, gradually, acclaimed and denigrated. Its signs are rearranged, as history is ignored or rejected with hostility. The text itself turns into a confrontation setting, not deprived of pathos, between history and utopia, which is clearly expressed by Sorin Alexandrescu "Cioran's enunciation places, *here* and *there*, intermingle/weave/, but do not change their value: now Cioran sees Bucharest, from Paris, with a certain melancholy. The subject can be found *here* or *there*, always in a situation of inferiority towards the Other: any position of enunciation is probably doomed. Your regime destroyed Utopia, but it always lives for you, Cioran seems to say, because you, *there*, hope for the utopia of a better *here*, or, we know here in the West that utopia no longer exists in the world. History followed a different course than the one dreamed by Cioran in his youth and created a negative utopia, which destroyed the very idea of Utopia." Between the active involvement in history (and messianism) from *The Transfiguration of Romania* and the ignorance of history, it is circumscribed the destiny of the thinker, who will have to face two decisive options, which will permanently follow/profoundly mark him. A first option is that of the exile, this "non-place" as Sorin Alexandrescu defines it. A second choice is the setting into the canons of another language; the uprooting being followed by a fierce search for a new identity. Or perhaps are we dealing here with a camouflage maneuver, with a kind of pseudonym technique, subtly filtered in the linguistic strategies offered by the new idiom? Sorin Alexandrescu believes it is about the thinker's aggression against himself: "The choice of language as well as the place of enunciation are an act of violence directed by Cioran against himself. For the Scythian who he was, it was hard to come to terms with this refined idiom, the civilized who he became regrets the freshness of the lost idiom. The speech does not adhere to human beings, all accommodation is a loss. "Subjugated/enslaved" by the new

language, the Scythian dies: and, with the language, the landscapes of childhood and the incendiary witticism of youth sink in the past, become memories.”(...).

For Cioran, exile was, without doubt, to the same extent, inner tear and release, sanctuary and damnation, resignation and revolt towards an uprooted destiny. The lack of national determinants, which exile brings, the loss of identity that a stateless person feels are compensated in some way, by retrieving it into a space of universality, of generic humanity, free from the grip of national landmarks. Therefore, Cioran's exile gradually turns into an exile with metaphysical connotations, so that the terms *here or elsewhere* lose their strictly geographical determinations, gaining rather symbolic shapes, as Sorin Alexandrescu observes: "*The non belonging* could still express a social loneliness, the desire of an indefinable *elsewhere* makes us foresee new horizons and the metaphysical exile opens the way to ontological discussion. The path that leads from a concrete historical fact to metaphysical drama is long, the Romanian texts show that it was rigorously followed by Cioran. Living the *concrete experience* of the exile and constantly deepening it, he discovered in its depths the *metaphysical* meaning of the exile ". Melancholy is, as Sorin Alexandrescu noted, a recurrent topos in Cioran's philosophical fragments. This mood of undoubted ambiguity, with fluctuating contours is made of boredom in the absence of the beloved or a spiritual principle of completeness, of longing for something undefined and of propensity to an absolute, hardly glimpsed in *ură/ ugly* and *dor/ homesick*. The consciousness of the exile, the consciousness of the marginal, is, in fact, thus dominated, decisively marked by the impact of the contradictory flow of melancholy, feeling that places the human being in a space - both ontological and scriptural - of an overwhelming uncertainty, a fact noted by Sorin Alexandrescu "the operator of melancholy plays an important role in Cioran' thinking. I saw that all the positive terms considered defining for this thinking collapsed before they could establish a coherent universe of meaning. Melancholy, on the contrary, nestled in the negative, seems to be able to distinguish among the different *roles* that Cioran likes to play, all located in the social marginality and metaphysics, the *marginality* of the prophet, the failure, the exiled, the skeptic (*le douteur*), the role that Cioran assigns in *La chute dans le temps*.

As many psychoanalytic connotations as one may assign, the fact is that *melancholy* is the product of an assault on consciousness, trauma that will dwell in the abyssal self of the thinker and will mark his writing, destiny and how he will relate to the world or peers. The emblematic metaphor for this postulation of melancholy as the generating element of being and of Cioran's writing, it seems to Sorin Alexandrescu, the image of a "lonely man behind a window, motionlessly looking at the moving, elusive, ephemeral, world outside". It is the metaphor of the absolute solitude, the presence of the self in front of the otherness who he seeks to abolish by undefining, forgetting, by the dissolving exercise, this time, of the eye. Cioran's condition of marginal being, of being that vehemently denies any institutionalization, outlined by Sorin Alexandrescu in the study *Cioran the day after the revolution*, is, without doubt, one that implies a rejection of modernity. Cioran is a thinker against his age, an age of pluralisms and simulacra. It is clear that Cioran is aware of the relativity of his speech, oscillating between marginality and universality. From this angle, the comparison between Cioran and Diogenes, the cynic, is not unfounded. Both Cioran and Diogenes are beings that deny any social commitment, that stay in the social shadow, even if Diogenes, unlike Cioran, has spectacular gestures. Cioran is, one may say, an anti-modern by definition, that perceives the

world of modernity as a world of devalued signs, of simulacra, of empty appearances, where the speeches, of a disconcerting plurality and overwhelming polisemantism, can not be heard, seen, understood. Hence Cioran's nihilistic vocation, his anti-modern radicalism which, however, does not propose a compensatory program, an explicit alternative, as Sorin Alexandrescu notes: "Both at the level of all his reflection themes and writing subjects, Cioran does not offer to such a despised modernity, any postmodern value, any affirmative alternative, based on a different social dynamic, but some clearly anti-modern values, inspired by an eternity without transcendence and by a wisdom in which faith has not ever been experienced".

Integration /Alienation

One of aporia becoming almost common place in the reception of Cioran's work is the relationship between integration and alienation, identity and rupture. The lonely and great skeptical of our time, Cioran expressed in his aphorisms the fundamental inability to attach to any strong national identity, in a disillusioned emotional projection, where the refusal of setting translates into a fundamental need to search for own roots, even if they often identify themselves with ontological nothingness: "When you think of other small countries, which have done nothing and indulge themselves in unconscious or empty, unjustified, pride then you can not withhold admiration for Romania's lucidity, which is not ashamed to mock itself, to reveal its nothingness with disdain, or to compromise itself in a dissolving skepticism." Very illustrative for the dialectic of identification and distancing from the image of his country, is the volume *Mon pays (My Country)*, bilingual edition appeared at Humanitas Publishing House, 1996. "Specialist of obsession", as he defines himself, Cioran testifies in *Mon pays*, the Romanian identity obsession, the passion that he felt at that time, for his own country, with its marginal destiny, with its historical geography damaged by the hostility of a timeless and metaphysical hybris: "I was far from turning thirty years, when I happened to make a passion for my country, desperate passion, aggressive, in which there is no escape and which harassed me for years to come. My country! I wanted at all costs to hold onto it - and there was nothing to cling to. I could not find any fact, nor the present or the past. Full of anger, I assigned a future to it, invented it, embellished it, without a moment of believing in it. I ended up by attacking it, the future, by hating it, I spit on my utopia. My loving and delirious hate was devoid of purpose, my country was turning into powder when meeting my gaze." Attachment to his own country is, for Cioran, one of those paradoxical, contradictory and oxymoronic feelings in which love and hate, attraction and rejection overlap/intermingle up to becoming indistinct. His passion, often denigrating, has no purpose than assuming, by his own country, of a fate that would leave the shadow cone of the anonymity of history. Strength, vitality, grandeur are rather projections of historical legitimacy of his own nation: "I wanted it strong, without measure, crazy, like an evil force, a fatality that would have made the world tremble, and she was small, modest, devoid of attributes that make up a destiny. When I turned to her past, I discovered nothing but servitude, resignation and humility, and when I turned to the present, I faced the same defects, some mutilated, others remaining intact. I examined it ruthlessly and with such a frenzy to find *something else* in it, that this frenzy made me unhappy, so was *far-sighted*".

Between the visionary and transfiguring pride of the young philosopher and the mediocre destiny of the country he belongs to, the distance is considerable. In fact, Cioran does nothing but to outline, in his early books, an ideal image of Romania, a projection rather ideal, a utopian geography, maintained and supported by its visionary zeal: "Then I came to understand, that my country does not stand up to my ego, that anyway, facing my requirements, it proved insignificant. Wasn't it then when I intended to write that I wanted to meet in her "France's destiny and China's population"? (...) Instead of directing my thoughts to a more consistent appearance, I was attached to my country, feeling that she would give me the pretext of endless torment, and that, as long as I dreamed of it, I would experience an inexhaustible source of suffering. I found a handy inexhaustible inferno, where my ego could reach exasperation *at my expense*. " The attachment for Romania is perceived as a gnoseologic punishment as a form of donquijotism and illusory prophetism. A country without destiny, Romania is no less a product of ideological consciousness that seeks its own legitimacy by assuming ontological indissoluble link with their country ("And this love became a punishment and a claim against my ferocious donchihotism. Talking endlessly about the fate of a country without fate: I became, in the pure sense of the word, a prophet in vain "). The philosopher's identity is linked to the exasperation of the matrix space that legitimizes his fervors and despairs. Referring, in *Mon pays*, to the *Transfiguration of Romania*, Cioran outlines his experiences and excessive obsessions with lucidity which the destiny of his own country has caused. "The thirst for unrelenting" that led to the philosopher's passionate passions, tortures and his vigils, which increasingly resemble, as stated, "someone else's", from the angle of the affective and temporal and emotional distancing, transpose Cioran in a space of rationality that discerns, in the past mirrors, the troubled face of the adolescent thirsty for the absolute and disgusted with certainty: "I wrote a book about my country that time: perhaps no one had attacked his country with similar violence. It was a madman's aberration. But, in my negation there was such a flame that now, after years, it's hard to believe that it was not a reversed love, an upside down idolatry. It was, that book, like an assassin's hymn, it was the theory spewing from the kidneys of a patriot without a country. Excessive pages, which allowed another country, my enemy, to use them in a campaign of slander, and maybe, of truth. I did not care! It was unrelenting thirst. And to a certain point, I was grateful to my country that gave me the opportunity to such great torment. I loved it because it could not meet my expectations. It was a good time: I believed in the reputation of unfortunate passions "

The identity aporias that reveal Cioran's writings do not have a fluctuating essence, being born of paradox undulations and baroque compositions of oxymoron. Love also implies hate or rebellion, as attachment has the necessary corollary right repulsion or passionate resentful involvement: "I exceedingly liked to be put to the test: and the ultimate test seemed to me to be born in my country. But the truth is that I needed tireless time of madness, the madness intertwined with action. I felt the need to destroy. I spent my days sprouting images of total destruction. "From the compensatory hatred for the minor destiny of the country where he was born, Cioran moves to self-hatred that transpires with deliberation in most of his aphorisms. His broken, illegitimate identity, is legitimized by this very fortuitous duality passion / detachment, giving originality to the entire work of Cioran's, as the revelations of exasperation and hatred are the binder of a resentful philosophy and, at the same time, a philosophy of lucid merciless: "It happened to me: I became

the center of my hate. I hated my country, everyone and the whole universe: the only thing left to do was to hate myself: what , in fact, I did on the verge of despair".

The need to configure an identity is legitimated, for the author of the *Transfiguration of Romania*, from the consciousness of a rupture, of a strong identity frustration, identity and rupture are the terms of an ontological and gnoseologic equation inextricably linked to the paradoxes of a thought that is born of negation rather than affirmation, of nihilistic enthusiasm rather than metaphysical optimism.

Cioran –the great sick man. Self-alienation A well represented category in the history of philosophy is that of the Aesop or resentful philosophers. The philosophy of Aesop's is the "resentful philosophy of the sick and ill formed in the history of philosophy," writes Gabriel Liiceanu in *Diary from Păltiniș*. Of those philosophers whose thinking was heavily influenced by disease, and body miseries and pettiness (Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Sartre, Jaspers). Not to mention Socrates, who also experienced numerous rebellions of the body. One of these great sick men, whose illnesses, humor and bad habits induced a very particular philosophy, is Cioran. How are body tribulations reflected in the pages of Cioran's aphoristic, which is the ratio between the wound and the letter, the relationship between ulceration and thought? What proportion is established between thought revelations and body avatars, between meditation elevation and fall into the abyss of corporality? Illness, suffering, pain, are, in fact, for Cioran, consciousness revelation, are catalysts of philosophical ideation. Cioran's "career of suffering", early begun, is part of a personality who deliberately puts ideas and ideals into psychosomatic disease. Marta Petreu correctly outlines Cioran's career as a patient: "No job (except in 1936-1937, High School "Andrei Șaguna" Brașov), without a definitive profession, no income, no property, no nationality and no country, thus defined mainly by negation, Cioran was instead rich in malady symptoms and diseases. A career of suffering, in other words, a sick identity, used as an excuse for his humiliating - in his own eyes - inactivity. Similarly, not once did Cioran say he was free from any livresque influence and entirely shaped by his disturbed physiology and diseases." For Cioran, disease is not only organic mess or insidious deterioration of the body. It is rather a sign of spiritual awakening, revelation being the innermost core of it, the disease is not without a certain "spiritual fecundity", as the philosopher noted. And this understanding of the disease is present in the very first book, *On the verge of despair*, where Marta Petreu emphasizes, "the disease is present from beginning to end, the book is made up of the metaphysical discoveries which the young author made due to his disease. Suffering radically worked in himself, waking him from the organic sleep, from the beatific unconsciousness of the age and the charming naivety of health, to transpose himself in a state that flattered his pride: lucidity ". Not only Cioran's inventory of diseases is worth of interest, but also, how these diseases, symptoms or suicidal tendencies have an impact on his philosophical ideas. The insinuating sliding from the area of organic disorder toward the perimeter of the concept *lived*, fervently assumed, is totally revealing to the destiny of the Romanian philosopher of French expression.

The disease that followed Cioran all his life and marked both his pace of life and creation, is, however, insomnia, illness resulting from an excess of lucidity and, like in a vicious circle, enormously amplifies this state of lucidity, pushing it to the limit of endurance. Sleep is equivalent to

hope, while insomnia is prone to despair. Sleep is the state of the fundamental indivisibility of beings, insomnia, and pain in general, is a separation, a "principle of individuation", so if an essentially healthy body integrates the individual in the mechanism of its human life and nature, the disease is an element of exclusion from the territory of vitality, a man's way of separating from his own life, its own drastic individualization. Authentic, lively, revealing philosophy results, says Cioran bluntly, in *The heights of despair*, from the tragic agony of disease, from the rustling labyrinth of the body, as the spirit is nothing but the sublimated expression of a disorder, an imbalance or organ failure ("Everything deep in this world can arise only from disease"). From this accountability and illustration of the spiritual benefits of disease derives the philosopher's response to sentimentalists that disguise their authentic feelings, intense and deep emotions or replace them with parade sentimentality, aestheticism without foundation. That is why, what really matters for Cioran is the philosophical reflection, "organic and personal expression following the variations and fluctuations of nerve and organic mood", as the philosopher expresses. It is clear therefore that corporality avatars, the tribulations of the tormented body crushed by disease are, for the Romanian thinker, a gateway - marked by suffering, pain, and lucidity - to the revelations of metaphysics, as Marta Petreu noted: "For Cioran, diseases and pains become an instrument of revelation, namely the metaphysical revelation. Noting that the consequences of pain are greater than those of pleasure, Cioran names (disorderly, but under the stylistic disorder it is hidden a genuine rigor, shooting straight from the unalterable austerity of archetypes) "the consequences of pain" and disease". Moreover, Cioran states that there are hierarchies and degrees of disease, depending on their ability of spiritual revival, of revelation of metaphysical latency of human consciousness. On the other hand, the suffering caused by ecstasy (the approaches to mystical ecstasy are as obvious as disturbing) cause not only the separation, individuation that pulls the man from his original paradise of indivisibility, but lead to the retrieval of the ultimate fund of experiences, one that reveals the essentiality of being, its origin and primacy. The gnoseologic benefits of suffering and disease therefore consist in the transgression of the rational limits and the assumption of a mystical condition, as Martha Petreu writes: "Suffering has activated in Cioran the archetypes of mystical living, with its complete expressions, with its chromatic, spatial and cognitive metaphors". Individuation and indivisibility are, in fact, the fundamental terms of the metaphysical equation that illustrates Cioran's case, along with several other philosophical sounding words such as: heights, abysses, rising, falling, flying, diving, empty, full, etc.. The disease is, for Cioran, rather a tool to trigger a state of grace, self revelation and inner perfection than pure cell degradation. It is true, it is the state of grace of a religious being, but "without God", of a "mystic denied". In this way, the consciousness of his own body and illness that follow him led the philosopher to spiritual perfection, to an ecstasy not without mystical meanings. For Cioran, corporality depths were always a corollary of authentic reflection, disinhibition, put on page with perfect rigor and stylistic mastery of the sentence. Disease, "mystical vehicle" as characterized by Marta Petreu, may be reduced, eventually, to a gradual, imperceptible and inevitable near drawing to death, the "essential evil" of the human condition. Marta Petreu notes that "our non-birth nostalgia, " the drawback "of having been born- and the accusation that the world is the product of" an evil demiurge " come, in his case, from this incurable disease: the mortality of the human being, the unbearable "feeling of dying." It's

a "scandal", it is the scandal itself, that makes Cioran cry ". The disease is thus to Cioran, a metaphysical way of singularization, a propensity to the horizon of solitude and nihilism. Viewed through the illness, suffering, which stimulated and configured the metaphysical enthusiasm, Cioran is the metaphysical exile par excellence.

Integration and alienation, identity and rupture, belonging to an original model and the continuous tendency of surpassing it, are some of the determinant peculiarities of Cioran's ideation, which is legitimized by assuming an identity both originating and intentional uprooting, by transgression of ethnic boundaries. Attraction and repulsion of personal origins, this is the archetypal model that generates the semantic potentialities of Cioran's texts, in which the paradox, the irony with cynical reflections and existential seriousness are intertwined.

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N. STEINHARDT – THE WAY TO THE TRUTH

Defined by I. Negoitescu as “an elite intellectual rumormonger”, N. Steinhart stands in Romanian national literature as an essayist who approached heterogeneous themes, ranging from art to literature, religion or morale. Intelligence and erudition seem to be N. Steinhart’s essential strong points, doubled by a generosity which prevents him from formulating critical judgment which should be either too firm or too severe. *Incertitudini literare* (1980), the monographic essay *Geo Bogza* (1982), *Critica la persoana întâi* (1983), *Escale în timp și spațiu* (1987), *Prin alții spre sine* (1988), *Monologul polifonic* (1991), *Dăruind vei dobîndi. Cuvinte de credință* (1992), *Primejdia mărturisirii* (1993) are books which made N. Steinhart one of the most gifted essayists of post-war Romanian literature. N. Steinhart’s popularity in the period after 1990 is mostly due to the work *Jurnalul fericiirii*, which is an autobiographical and essayistic text derived from the authors’ experience in prison. The thematic amplitude of the critical spirit allows for a categorization of N. Steinhart’s creation among the essayists, with an increased capacity of assimilating in his writing highly diverse ideas, theories, principles and methods to which he confers the sharpness of his own careful sensitivity for the new, the unexpected. The essayist appreciates the value of culture, in a somehow paradoxical way, from the perspective of the vitalizing energies that his work shelters: “When considered in its true assertion, devoid of any solemn useless ornaments, culture is an ode to life. It is equally warm, vivacious and strong as life itself.” As a matter of fact, the concept of “trairism” itself, is, for N. Steinhart, devoid of any negative aura, as he considered that “the concept of ‘trairism’ was understood as and should only be understood as an assertion of the indissolubility of the life-culture couple”. In an attempt to identify and explain the “mystery” of N. Steinhart’s work, Valeriu Cristea noted that N. Steinhart is an “essential anti-purist. N. Steinhart is a practitioner of true criticism without thinking to stop, to limit himself to this, without letting himself imprisoned, like a slave, in its strictly defined domain. He is an extraordinary critic who refuses (more precisely: can’t) to be *only* a critic. He is also an extraordinary novelist, but also a philosopher, a jurist, a historian, an adviser, a guide, almost a preacher, a person who wants to build”.

The criticism that N. Steinhart practises is in itself a vitalist one, with insertions of genuine living, it is a form of criticism in which empathy is the fundamental way of communication / communion with the literary work. On the other hand, the contemplating I is in fervent search for himself in the mirror of the text, in a revelation of his true impulses and impetus (“this fervent love, this irresistible attraction, this almost physical need for liberty and this sacred disgust for hypocrisy” or “the lack of fear, the love for freedom, the defiance of lowliness and of trifles meant to shatter the soul and turn us into what has so plastically defined by Bergson as the real emulating the mechanic”.

Pointing out the essayist’s main traits, Gh. Grigurcu notes that “N. Steinhart’s writing reveals as a seismograph a romantic, lively temperament, to the limit of the graphics itself of emotion in pure form. Subjectivity is therefore reigning on its most vulnerable aspect, the one which is most exposed to the philistine – or only frigid – eye, despite the so-called critical norms”. The more or less

sentimental effusions abound in N. Steinhardt's work as a nude expression of emotion faced with an artistic form ("Never have I experienced such emotion, craving, desire, restlessness"; "I love these industrious and elegant trams: childishly, crazily, paradisiacally"; "It's like seeing Paris for the first time. Amazed, I realized I had fallen in love long before. I feel like stopping, kissing the walls, caressing the pavement"). In a fragment evoking Paris, the tonality gains a euphoric rhythm standing for the writing's extreme authenticity. This is an instance of summative dialects of camouflage and revelation, of suggestive rendering and suave symbolism characterizing a geographical space charged with incontestable cultural connotations: "It doesn't hide anymore, doesn't shelter itself; it generously offers me everything. It strips for me, the unworthy, the bastard, it makes me happy and lifts me high, granting upon me the power to unveil with incredulous eyes landscapes beyond compare, which are meant to cause enthusiasm, to capture and madden the soul and the mind and the spirit and the 'person' and the fantasy and all the corners and spots of the chosen person's body and psychic". The vitalist vigor with which cultural values are perceived is tempered by certain unconventional, not at all rigid ethic criteria and norms which, in their turn, have a rigorously determined affective foundation. Sincerity, for instance, is limited to the fragile shape of the individual personality, by the diversity of affections singularized at the level of the creative individuality: "the excessive appeal to sincerity, the voracious revelation of all personal or surrounding limitations and turpitudes has always seemed to me as a little enticing trend of contemporary literature".

Referring to the "Paltinis School" and to the cultural elitism which it practised and which condemned anything falling beyond the specter of the most elevated philosophy, N. Steinhardt is drastic in his assertions, even though these assertions are a camouflage for sanctions under the veils of an ecclesiastic and ceremonious style: "Paltinis, situated at an altitude of 1600 meters, is similar to the high peaks of the mountains where the noble people's castles were perched, having the conviction that they – the knowledgeable, the pure – were the only keepers of the key to all mysteries. What about the other ones, the grocers, the herds of philosophers who, *mutatis mutandis*, don't even know the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* and haven't even read Kant in E. Cassirer's (appropriate) edition? *They'll see*. Lost, fatally lost, doomed to destruction and eternal death, to irremediable darkness".

The style of N. Steinhardt's essays is structured from the perspective of a fundamental duality which casts doubt, on the one hand, over the aspiration to beauty, over the cult of apollinic forms and the reverie of reading and, on the other hand, over romantic sensibility, elementarism, dionisiac impulses towards the vitalist embrace of culture and nature at the same time. For instance, structuralists are sanctioned in words with archaic sounds, in rough tonalities, in a fusion of elegiac and biblical tones ("Oronte and Trissotin have resurrected, more stable and intransigent as ever! And, they invoke scientific words that the scholarly women's friends and intransigent mentors did not possess. Now wait and see gruffness, issued from a sacrosanct vocabulary! And all those who do not adhere to it are immediately doomed, disregarded, forgotten in a century labeled by derision. Don't think I am speaking in vain".) On the other hand, the essayist unequivocally expresses his availability for the new, for the innovations of modernity, by rejecting all esthetic prejudice and the adherence to conventions, to constraining patterns, devoid of any epistemological value: "I don't believe this would be so. I believe I have made proof that I wholeheartedly love the literature and the

art of my times, I have no esthetic prejudice, I get along perfectly with the new poetry, and the same with music. But I will not let myself impressed, intimidated and frightened by preciosity, scholarly expressions and the mandatory adoption of a ritualistic language (labeled as the sole keeper of elegant expression and entitled to go public). I do not fear any kind of *newspeak* (which used to be a positivist and sociological Sorbonne, and now has turned phenomenological and structuralist) however unforgiving and elegant it may be. And I will not pray at any altar”.

The advantage of N. Steinhardt’s essayistic writing is in fact its vulnerable element: the pathos, sometimes turned into rhetoric leads to an inflated writing which, in the game of affections, turns the subject which is going to be treated into a simple pretext for exalted effusions, as in the following fragment, in which the essayist expresses his satisfaction with regard to the Mircea Eliade’s reedited books: “The joy, of course, was not just mine, but of all the critics or simple readers (especially young ones) who want (or craving for, to be more precise) authentic literature, unfalsified writing, which should not be soiled, bleached and dishonored by the law of imitation, servitude, conformism, the law of the prudent eye-shut and of the careful ear-covering, the law of the over-conscientiousness in the application of orders given by inferior bodies and of other tough and immortal laws and principles instated in the shades through which, alas, history passes just like the solar system does when it goes through galactic spaces detained in cosmic dust”. It is obvious that the temptation of the ethicism, of moralization which is often encountered in N. Steinhardt’s pages are concretized in an extremely plastic tone, which gathers in itself the apocalyptic imagery and the retort tot austerit, while focusing on the idea of the deontological dimension of writing: “I pity the man of culture who is not also wise, to a certain extent, and scholarly, in the sense that our old texts have given to the word. He will suddenly be threatened by the scribe’s and the Pharisee’s monomany and wretched coldness! And information and necessity are not the same as liberty. I pity the one who thinks this way. The information is auxiliary, work tool, servant (...). So be strong on the advantageous position that you have adopted. Do not let yourselves deceived and troubled by sharp assertions. Insolence is not advisable in everyday life. Respect, thoughtfulness and kindness are appropriate. The situation is different in the realms of ideas: here, vain assertions and slogans are to be strongly and ruthlessly defied and, if necessary, exposed, ripped up, cut open, like dragons: pulverized. May ashes and dust come of them!”. N. Steinhardt’s essays always impose themselves in their spiritualized form by the need of accurately quantifying a quality, a human trait, a purpose, but also by the approach to the methodical spirit, which is capable of dissociating, of imposing limits, of suggesting differences (“The simple, playful, proud, churlish, possessive clarity is a utopia, and the darkness mentioned by Thomas More may be a scientific goal, that is human hard and modest toil in the way to the truth, a way which can easily be lost in wildwood any time one is not attentive to the deceiving appearances, traps and pitfalls”).

The essayist’s writing does not avoid irony, a ceremonious and delicate irony sometimes reversed onto itself or, at other times, mordant, brittle, whose incisiveness can be anticipated beyond the mask of its reticent cerebrality (“Those in matter should be content with the good they do, with the wonderful knowledge they have accumulated, but they should not be strangers to humbleness and compassion – ever-growing, benevolent, generous compassion – for the less gifted, for those who spend their vain existence in superficiality, essay writing, literature and various other forms of deception”). N. Steinhardt’s theological texts (*Dăruind vei dobândi*, *Cartea împărtășirii* etc) stand out with

a certain austerity of the phrase, by the moderate and well-balanced resort to allegory, symbol and metaphor in the designation of biblical figures or of ritualistic steps in the human being's spiritual and religious becoming. The rapport with Jesus Christ is transcribed in an austere and solemn register: "Christ is always paradoxical and always acts faultlessly in an unexpected way. Pascal says that if God exists, He can only be *strange*. The fact is that during His earthly life, Christ always acted differently from what one would have expected. Wherever one thought He had no place being in a certain place, there He was. Whenever one thought He wouldn't speak to a certain person that was the person He would speak to. It is as if He did it purposely, in order to scandalize us, to make us see, to wake us up from our habitude, from spiritual habits, to shock us (just as the *zen* conceives the concept of satori, meant to awaken the individual from somnolence and lead him to the knowledge of the truth)". The theological matter is a fundamental one for the essayist N. Steinhardt. It should be mentioned that it is perceived from a totally untypical perspective, as his religious texts are confessions characterized by authentic pathos of the approach to sacrality. For N. Steinhardt the centrality is represented by the Divine, by the transcendent, by the sacred space to which the human being adheres by communion. In N. Steinhardt's conception, there is a relation of consubstantiality between the ethic and the esthetic. Thus, denunciation of the "pact with the devil" performed by some writers who served the communist regime has, for the essayist, the quality of a purifying moral expansion which is capable of providing an efficient remedy against the guilty amnesia that many of yesterday's and today's writers suffer from.

MIRCEA ELIADE – MEANINGS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSE

In the structure of Mircea Eliade's polyvalent work, the autobiographic writings have a very special place, considering the features and formal paradigms of this type of discourse. A hermeneutical perspective on Mircea Eliade's works implies certain risks and difficulties, due to its complexity and profundity and to the various fields of approach and manifestation of the imaginary. Eliade's writing variety, doubled by an encyclopedic spirit, denies a univocal interpretation, opening itself to a plurality of interpretations, to polyvalent readings, able to capture the nuances, the symbols, the representations and figures that are privileged in this 20th century modern work of art.

On the other hand, an analysis of the "syntax of the imaginary" in Eliade's works must deal with two dominant sides: the scientific discourse and the literary discourse, which may be integrated into a unitary interpretation by assuming a transdisciplinary method that would favor, in Edgar Papu's terms, "the synthesis in an organic entity of erudition and sensibility". We may say that, several times, Mircea Eliade's works were investigated through a dichotomist perspective, its two fields – the scientific one and the literary one – being, if not completely separated, at least subjected to a distinct analysis, therefore lacking the benefits of a synthetic principle.

It may be considered that Eliade's syntax of imaginary is marked by two axes, two dimensions: a diurnal one, materialized in the scientific texts and a nocturnal one, featured by the works of fiction. The two types of discourse should not be seen in dichotomy, but as complementary ways of manifestation of the creative spirit, as between them numerous translations and combinations may be noted, sometimes even in the same text. The analysis of such a "hybrid discourse" should be accomplished by a double perspective, following the glides of the diurnal discourse in the space of the literary work as well as the avatars of the nocturnal discourse and its translation in the scientific text, a fact noted by a young researcher of Eliade's work, Nicolae Sera. By such a dual, mirror-like approach of the text, a synthetic, integral perception may be achieved, resulting in an efficient description of the dimensions, paradigms and revelations of Eliade's works.

It is certain that Eliade himself appreciated the role played by imagination in his creative system, not only in the field of fiction but also in that of the erudite text: "*Scientific imagination is not far from artistic imagination. My scientific books are almost always books that express the real dreams of humanity. The two tendencies conciliate very well in my ego*". But imagination also has a very well defined cognitive function, allowing it to configure a type of analogic knowledge, a more supple and dynamic knowledge, able to easily follow the paradoxes and diversity of the universe. Through such a methodic perspective on the interferences, connections and filiations of the two voices of Eliade's writing, the texts with autobiographical features play a mediating and integrating role, appearing as spaces of confluence, of intersection.

A few considerations on the status and finality of the autobiographical texts must be made, as these texts are part of a hybrid literary genre, a "frontier" genre. Thus, it may be said that an ego that continually contemplates itself in the mirrors of the autobiographical text receives, by the very act of reflection, a certain distance from itself and a tendency of no longer recognizing itself in its own

past or in its own text. From this point of view, autobiographical writing is not the invocation of an ideal image, of a mythical projection of the personal ego, but the evocation of an ego that restlessly searches its own identity. On the other hand, we must underline the fact that the speculation and self-speculation are “immediate” data of autobiographical writings, as the impressions, sensations and perceptions are permanently subjected to a “direction”, to a scenery of the present, being, so to say, “presentified”.

The diary, the memoirs, as well as the other forms of autobiographical discourse have, beyond any doubt the status of a document, of a de-doubled writing in which the world, with its polymorphic landscape, meets the subjectivity of the writer. From this perspective of revelation, the autobiographical text produces a dual effect – both mystifying and un-mystifying – because, while it imposes a central figure, a character – the ego that objectifies its desires and frustrations, becoming the witness of its own role – the subjective writing nevertheless reveals, in a direct relation to the lucidity of the writer, the imposture of the narrative-self, reducing to their true dimensions its gestures and experiences. The freedoms and servitudes of the autobiographical discourse result exactly from these difficult relations between interiority and exteriority, from the unstable balance on which the autobiography – an impure genre, lacking prestige- builds itself, in an uncertain space where confession and objectivism, the exit from the self, live together beneficially.

We must also underline the fact that the autobiographic text represents an ambiguous literary genre, defined by its condition of authenticity and sincerity that has a somehow decorative form, a conventional, artificial aspect, as between the moment of confession and the moment of the transposition of the contemplation there is an interval of reflection, when random gestures are reorganized. In other words, between the time of confession and the time of existence a relation of inner-determination and even disruption is established. From this point of view, autobiography is more of an attempt of purification than a genuine self-portrait, an invocation of an ideal image rather than the evocation of an ego that restlessly seeks for the degraded contour of its personality in the latest drawn figure. Undoubtedly, the autobiographic discourse is at the same time a document, a writing with depositional features, where the echoes of the world, in their direct reference, meet the subjectivity of the one writing himself in the most direct way. It is obvious that this type of literature has decisively contributed to the revelation of the hidden face of artists, and that it has favored the representation of events, physiognomies, facts and even revealed the mysterious side of famous works.

By gathering speculation and self-speculation in a point of convergence that is somehow transfiguratory, any autobiographical writing proposes an image of the ego and of the world that is altered by the auctorial intentions of the writer. The impressions, sensations, perceptions of the past are subjected to a direction of the present of writing that distorts, motivates or redraws the facts, giving them an idealizing contour. This process of styling is, in fact, the danger faced by any diary, with or without its author’s will. Subjective literature always focuses, in its structure, on the fragility of minor notations and on the benefits of an essential utterance of the self. Autobiographical writing is meant to satisfy some documentary exigencies (about the literary life, the political system, the evolution of consciousness) as well some esthetic exigencies (style, manner of portraying characters, psychological dynamics, etc.). We may even consider that these works are also meant to be mirrors of the exterior and interior existence, documents and substitutes of real and personal life. We must

also underline the fact that this mirror often lacks harmony and utopia, being lucid and fragmentary. It is a broken mirror, revealing the most contradictory features of the being and of reality.

In Claude-Henri Rocquet's book of interviews *L'épreuve du Labyrinthe* (*The Trial of the Labyrinth*), Mircea Eliade attempts to draw the generative nucleus and, at the same time, the mechanisms on which literature relies and its role in the configuration and revelation of human essence: "*It is known that literature, oral or written, is the daughter of mythology and has inherited some of its functions: to narrate events, to narrate something significant that has happened in the world. But why is it so important for us to know what is happening, to know what happens to the lady having her tea at 5 o'clock? I think that every story, even the story of a common fact, prolongs the great tales narrated by the myths that explain how the world was born and how our condition has become the one we know today. I believe that our interest in the narrative is part of our way of being in the world. It answers our need of bearing finding out what happened, what people have accomplished and what they are able to do: the risks, the adventures, their various attempts. We are not like rocks, unmovable, or like flowers, insects, the lives of which are pre-defined: we are human beings formed by happenings, by events. And the man will never give up listening to stories?*".

Trying to decipher the plans and dimensions of his own literary writing, Eliade refers to the components of narrativity, to the particular way of structuring in his texts. Here is how he explains the generative mechanisms and the fictionalizing models of real in *Noaptea de Sanziene*, a novel he considered his masterpiece. We have here, in the contracted lines of his expressions, a Poetics of Eliade's prose: "*I am unable to make a plan. The work always appears around a vision, a landscape or a dialogue. I see the beginning very clearly, sometimes the end and, step by step, during work, I discover the events and the web of the novel or the short-story. For Noaptea de Sanziene, the first image was the main character. He was walking through a forest near Bucharest, about the midnight. In the forest, he meets with a car and then with a girl. All these were an enigma for me. Who was the girl? And why was the character walking through the woods looking for a car near the girls? Slowly, I found out who the girl was, I knew all her story. But it all initiated in some sort of vision. I saw all of these, as if I had dreamt them... I was not interested only in the religious symbolism of the solstice, but also in the images and themes of Romanian and European folklore. In this particular night, the sky opens and one may see the world beyond and disappear in it... If somebody sees this mysterious vision, that somebody steps out of time and space. He will experience a moment lasting an eternity... Nevertheless, it was not this meaning of the symbolism that was obsessing me, but that night itself*".

Short-stories and novels are seen by the author from the perspective of a dialectics sacred / profane and of some fundamental themes that are iterated with natural nuances in almost all his literary works: the coincidence of contraries (*coincidentia oppositorum*), the road to the center, the labyrinth, the attic, the dream, the myth of eternal return, the double, the levitation, etc. An extremely important theme of Eliade's speculative system is that of the coincidence of contraries, a theme originating in Nicolaus Cusanus and also frequented by Jung, from a more psychological point of view.

The considerations about the dialectic relation between sacred and profane, about the symbolic value of the elements acting as vehicles of transition between the sacred and the profane, about the mythical meaning of the hierophant experiences, are mainly based on this duality of hiding and revelation, of coding and decoding, of forgetting and anamnesis, that is a feature of Mircea Eliade's texts. The sacred space, the symbolic of the centre, of the limit and positive or negative utopia, the sacred time with its specific morphology, the theme of the double, represent thematic invariants that

structure Eliade's discourse. The essential feature for Eliade is the theme of the camouflaging of the sacred into the profane, with various textual avatars and representations: *"In my novels, I always try to camouflage the fantastic into the everyday life. In this novel that complies to all the rules of the Romanesque novel of the 19th century, I wanted, therefore, to camouflage a certain symbolic significance of the human condition. This camouflage was successful, I think, since the symbolism does not alter at all the epic of the story. I think that the trans-historic is always camouflaged into the historic and the extraordinary in the ordinary. Aldous Huxley was speaking about the vision provided by LSD, referring to it as a visio beatifica: he saw the forms and colors as Van Gogh saw his famous chair. It is certain that this dark real, this everyday reality, camouflages something else. It is my profound belief. This aspect should also pass into the novel-novel, not only in the fantastic one... In all my stories, the narrative develops on several levels, in order to progressively reveal the fantastic hidden in the everyday simplicity. Like a new axiom reveals a new structure of the real, unknown until that moment – or, in other words, establishes a new world – fantastic literature reveals, creates, parallel universes. This is not an evasion, as historicist philosophers claim, because the creation – on all levels and in all the meanings of the term – is a defining feature of the human condition"*.

The symbolic of the labyrinth is of major importance to Eliade's writing. In fact, in the same dialogues with Claude-Henri Rocquet, Mircea Eliade considers that his life is placed, with all the successes and revelations, under the sign of the labyrinth, a sign that confers an organic character, coherence and integrative vocation to events that appear as neutral, random during a lifetime: *"A labyrinth is sometimes the magical protection of a centre, of a treasure, of a meaning. Entering it may be an initiation ritual, as it may be seen in the myth of Theseus. This symbolism is the model of any existence that, by passing through numerous trials, approaches its own center, its own self, Atman, to use the Indian term... Several times I was aware that I was exiting the labyrinth, that I had found the way. Before, I felt desperate, lost... Of course, I didn't say to myself I am lost in the labyrinth, but, at the end, I still had the impression that I had conquered a labyrinth. Each of us has known this experience. It must me added that life is not made of a single labyrinth: the trial is renewed... Not once I was certain that I had touched it (the centre, nn, I. B.) and, by touching it, I learned a lot, I recognized myself. Then I got lost again. This is our condition, we are neither angels, nor heroes. When man reaches his centre he enriches himself, his consciousness widens, all becomes clear, significant> but life goes on: another labyrinth appears, other trials, other ways of trial, on another level"*. The mythical, archetypal figure of Ulysses is related to the symbol of the labyrinth, a prototype of the politropic condition of the European man, always searching for his own condition and spiritual identity. His adventures at sea may well be assimilated to a symbolic road to the Centre (*"Ulysses is for me the prototype of man, not only modern man, but also the man connected to the future, for he is the type of the haunted traveler. The travel is a road to the centre, to Ithaca, in other words, to himself. He was a good sailor, but destiny – or the initiating trials he had to go through – always forced him to delay his return home. I believe that the myth of Ulysses is extremely important to us. Each of us will have something from Ulysses, searching, like him, trying to get to some place and undoubtedly finding our country, our home, ourselves. But, like in the labyrinth, in any travel there is the risk of getting lost. If you manage to exit the Labyrinth, to find your home, then you become a different being"*).

The stature of Mircea Eliade's personality may be understood through his double vocation, as for him the scientific research and literature represented ways of deciphering the signs of the world and of history, privileged hermeneutic approaches. We must underline that literature is not configured as a simple, didactic, demonstrative illustration of the scientific ideas; the two universes explain and illuminate each other's meanings and symbols. Thus, a generative relation is drawn, that

is archetypal to Eliade's creative effort: the Hermeneutical relation. On one hand, Mircea Eliade's literature contains various modern elements, on the level of epic construction, fictional representation of the real or formal expression: the insertion of interior monologue, temporal discontinuity, confessions, the presence of essay-like elements, the refined dosage of narration and interpretation, etc.

On the other hand, the role of the symbol in Eliade's work is of great importance, and its unifying and integrative function allows the fragments to unite into harmony. Hermeneutics is, for Mircea Eliade, the methodic attempt that is able to decode and understand the meanings in religious symbols. *"Hermeneutics is the search for meaning, for signification or significations that an idea or a phenomena had in time. A history of different religious expressions may be drawn. But Hermeneutics is also the discovery of the more and more profound meaning of religious expressions. I call it creative from two reasons. First of all, it is creative for the Interpreter himself. The effort he makes to decipher the revelation present in a religious creation – ritual, symbol, myth, divine figure... - to understand its signification, function, goal, this effort enriches the consciousness and existence of the researcher. It is an experience that the historian of literatures, for instance, does not know... Hermeneutics is also creative because it reveals certain values that were not obvious on the level of immediate experience... The Hermeneutic work reveals the latent significances of symbols and their becoming... Hermeneutics creative to the reader because he understands, for instance, the symbolism of the cosmic tree – and this is also true for people who are not interested in the history of religions – and thus the reader experiences more than an intellectual delight. He makes an important discovery for his life. From that moment on, when he will look at some trees, he will see in them the mystery of the cosmic rhythm. He will see in them the mystery of life that is reborn and continues – during winter – the loss of leaves, than, the spring... This has a totally different meaning than deciphering a Greek or Latin inscription. A historic discovery is, of course, important. But, by this, the man discovers a certain position of the spirit in the world".*

Eliade's *Memoirs* have the fluent form of a story of his own life and destiny, that is textually directed from the dominating perspective of authenticity, a key-concept of his literature. The synthetic feature of the "author's spiritual biography" (Mircea Handoca) is dominant. Respecting the chronology of his own life, the author also performs temporal interferences and mutations of spatial dimensions that play a contextual role in the narrative. Some interior scenes are also memorable, descriptions of spaces familiar to Eliade (the famous attic, for instance), as well as the detailed description of events that marked the biographic and artistic destiny of the writer.

On the other hand, some portraits of remarkable personalities, seen in their essential features, with exponential gestures and revealing aspects, are extremely interesting. Nae Ionescu's portrait is very significant, as he is the philosophy teacher that marked the spiritual destiny of many intellectuals between the two world wars. The portrait is accompanied by an introduction into the "context" that is revealing for Eliade's epic talent: "I shall never forget the first Metaphysics lesson I attempted. He had announced a course on "Faust and the problem of salvation". The Titu Maiorescu room was full and I had difficulty finding a seat in the back. A dark, pale man, entered, with black eyebrows and sad bluish eyes of unusual brightness; when he suddenly looked from a wall to the other he seemed to thunder across the room. He was thin, quite tall, dressed in a sober manner, but with an elegant negligence; and he had the most beautiful and expressive hand I had ever seen, with long, thin and nervous thumbs. When he spoke, his hands were shaping the mind, underlining the nuances, anticipating the difficulties, the question marks... He sat on the chair, rolled his eyes to the back of the room and started to speak. An strange silence came, as if everybody was holding their breath.

Nae Ionescu did not talk like a teacher, he was not holding a lesson or a conference. He had started a conversation and he was speaking to each of us, as if he was telling a story, presenting a series of facts, proposing an interpretation and then waiting for our answers. You had the impression that the whole lesson is only a part of a dialogue, that each of us was invited to discuss, to confess his opinion at the end of the class. You felt that what Nae Ionescu was saying wasn't to be found in any book. It was something new, freshly thought and organized right there, in front of you, on the desk. It was a personal thinking and, if you were interested in this kind of thinking, you knew you couldn't find it anywhere else, that you had to come here to receive it from the source. The man was speaking to you directly, opening problems to you and teaching you how to solve them, forcing you to think".

Writing meant for Eliade a continuous offering, a fascinating implication into the universal rhythms and into the rhythms of his own destiny, a tension of the understanding and performance, a search for genuine experience („*To feel that each written line tears something out of your own life, drinks your blood, empties your brains. To feel how writing drains all the substance in your life. That is the only way it is worth writing*").

Mircea Eliade's autobiographical texts, either diaries, memoirs or his interviews are totally relevant for the stature, methods and Poetics of the writer. We find here, in a fragmentary, concise or, on the contrary, digressive style, the essential data of his spiritual portrait, his unique physiognomy, the landmarks of his destiny and, at the same time, the articulations of his overwhelmingly complex and profound work.

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RADU STANCA. THE SPECTACULAR POETRY

Preliminaries

Within the literary atmosphere specific to the end of World War II, the Literary Circle in Sibiu represented the moment of aesthetic resurrection and the cultivation of human and cultural values extracted from the critical descent of Maiorescu. In this respect, Nicolae Balota notices that “the aestheticism of literary circle is, therefore, the cultivation of the aesthetic and its subversion too. Very modern, without reaching the extremism of the avant-garde which tried to undermine the artistic in a premeditated way, to cause an explosion of art, often failing to produce anything but stunning aesthetic artifices, the aestheticism of the Literary Circle anchored art in a sphere that infinitively exceeded the artistic and, at the same time, de-anchored art allowing it to float freely on a sea of aesthetic liberties, playing – by means of irony, parody and detached coquetry- with the risks of the self-annihilation of art.” The poets of the Literary Circle in Sibiu started with the premise of the fundamental ambiguity of the poetic act, in the alchemy of which are to be found, with equal justification and fervour, the solemnity of the utterance and the instinct of play, formal rigour and the ceremony of gratuity. Accordingly, Radu Stanca emphasized that “the leap of poetry from experience into construction is necessary”, focusing on the necessity to discipline feelings, on the conversion of moods into poetic ritual, into lyrical ceremony, into a construct with compelling aesthetic valences.

The Manifest of the Literary Circle in Sibiu was published in spring of 1943 in the newspaper *Viața* and is both a letter of solidarity with the normative and axiological criticism of direction of Lovinescu and “an appeal to humanitarian ideals which were beyond the narrow ambitions of that time and a protest against some submitted art,” according to Nicolae Balotă, who continues: “As signatories of that manifest made an enthusiastic profession of faith for the aesthetic criticism that descended from Maiorescu, attacks - along with some warm adhesions – did not hesitate to occur”.

The importance of the *Literary Circle in Sibiu* for the evolution of postwar Romanian lyricism is indisputable. In an article of programmatic concern, entitled *Perspectivă (Perspective)*, I. Negoitescu nuances the circumstances and motivations that led to the *Manifest of the Literary Circle*. “The *Manifest* had started from a lucid need for severance. It was not a principled rejection of patriotic poetry, just as there would not be today of the so-called social literature. The work of art may include other values than the aesthetic. However, if it does not cover this, it is null as a work of art. The great artist does not confuse this aspect, therefore their work is sustainable: their objective is aesthetic, even if by an outstanding force they attract other values as well.” The programmatic imperatives of *the Manifest of the Literary Circle* are also found in various modulations and theoretical nuances in the *Literary Circle Review*, published in Sibiu between January-August 1945, having a total of six issues. The review will publish essays, programmatic articles, and actual literary works of art of writers such as Negoitescu I. Radu Stanca, ID Sirbu, Stephen August. Doinas, Ioanichie Olteanu, Cornel Regman, Nicholas bales, Victor Iancu, Henri Jacquier etc.

Significantly, the programmatic text that opens the first issue of the journal, a text entitled *Perspective* and signed by I. Negoitescu literature, particularly underlines the dissociation of literature from the political factor, in the name of restoring the principle of the autonomy of the aesthetic and literary work liberation from any historicist, local, ethnical trends: "When, in the spring of 1943, the literary manifest of the circle was published, as a eulogy of the spirit of freedom, as a reintegration of the young generation in a Romanianship with a universal perspective, detached from the nebulae of political and regionalist circumstances, this fact was considered, both in the world of propagandistic and Orthodox literature and in the literature of the oppressed left, as an act with political significance." George Grigurcu believes that "in the name of the aesthetic, the circle members rejected the patriotic lament, the local discourse, the messianic Ardeal. They were not too shy to express their belief that the exaltations of the ethnos are obsolete and therefore damaging. Placing themselves above the historical moment, a disagreeable one admittedly, at the altitude of the aspiration towards a creation which transgresses the occasional, they did not deny, however, as some have argued, the idea of ethnicity, but projected it on the screen with representative perennial values. Beyond the reminiscences of the Semanatorism, the rudimentarily claiming accents of the hurt feeling of country affiliation, the annoying rural and anachronistic features, which Radu Stanca called *pășunism*, they targeted at a 'substantial 'Romanianism'".

Admittedly, the fact that they refused to enrol their creations in the vicious circle of circumstantialism and the exaltation of the past does not mean that the literary club members rejected history. Only that they aimed at a broader circumscription of the aesthetic fact, a transgression of the regional, of mediocrity and provincialism: "We felt we had deep roots and thought earnestly of the Ardeal school and the Latinist one, of Budai-Deleanu, of Codru Drăgușanu. These roots were certainly very physical in the geographical sense, because our attitude meant first of all the denunciation of regionalist prejudice". In another article, entitled in a very significant way *Viitorul literaturii române? (The Future of Romanian literature?)*, I. Negoitescu states, with many arguments, the organic evolution of Romanian literature and its development under the auspices of Western culture and literature: "What the humanities that richly nurtured the revival of the French literature meant for that literature, the discovery of Western cultures, which were treated with a devouring appetite, meant for our literature. In this language just out of the Middle Ages, still hesitant and barbarian, although the original material was taken from the language of the great civilizations of Rome, the latest refined lyric states of Western arts were poured. Within this new amazing alloy, Romanian poetry was born." No doubt both the aesthetic programme of the *Manifest* and the programmatic texts of the *Literary Circle Review* are the result of intimate and at the same time, lucid adhesions to the aesthetics of Lovinescu, as emphasized by Negoitescu in the same article, *Perspectivă*: "We were maliciously called by some 'the aesthetes of Ardeal'. A ridiculous and twice odious formula. First, because the preferred literature in our literary circle is claimed from the refusal of cultural localism and then just because the outdated and anarchic aestheticism, improper to our aspirations is applied to a title famous for its stubborn tradition. The Manifest had started from a lucid need for dissociation."

Within the *Literary Circle Review* the aesthetic criticism is given a privileged place, considering that it must have a guidance role for taste and a consolidation role for authentic aesthetic values, which must be separated from other types of values: "The importance of dissociation is especially disclosed in literary criticism, where the lack of value discrimination

leads to the falsification of the readers' taste, to creating confusion in the minds of lecturers who are thus deceived and deprived of aesthetic delight, mainly to their own disadvantage. Therefore, the awareness of an audience must determine criticism founded on solid aesthetic principles."

The most significant representative of the criticism practised by the literary circle members was, no doubt, Nicholas Balotă, who, in essays published mainly in *Familia*, but also in the volume called *Euphorion*, places emphasis on the axiological and anthropological character of the critical act ("It is only natural that the broadest perspective of criticism as a discipline, as field of exploration or as a tool of investigation to occur when we consider it as an investigation method of the human being. Today *anthropological criticism* is the most comprehensive formula of this investigation. Marxism has its own anthropology. Psychoanalysis is an attempt at exploring the abysmal human psychology. Structuralism also argues that, in order to understand the great works of art, it takes an anthropological model. Various schools, contemporary trends are similar in this regard - beyond all distinctions between them. Criticism is tributary to philosophical anthropologies.") Similarly, in an article, Victor Iancu argues for axiological criticism, a criticism based on the ideal of identifying, illustrating and enhancing values: "Modern axiology has shown us that substantiating aesthetic value on other values, such as moral, religious, social values etc., far from cancelling it, it often protects it. If *Faust* is considered such a representative literary masterpiece for humanity, this is undoubtedly also due to its broad anthropological character. Shakespeare's great creations live particularly because they depict such deep and typical human qualities."

In the pages of *Literary Circle Review*, Radu Stanca is distinguished by its position of repudiating "pure poetry", lamenting, as George Grigurcu points out, "the technique surpassed by invention". To Radu Stanca pure poetry turned into "purist" poetry is nonsense: "Just as soon as they heard that they are pure, the pure poet turned into 'purist', therefore, they transformed a reality into an attitude, a normative one. The findings changed face also claiming to be prescriptions which make the poet's task easier, when in fact they considerably lightened the poetic load." According to Radu Stanca, the solution to this purist, stagnant and aesthetically irrelevant poetry is the literary species of the ballad, whose resurrection is proclaimed and illustrated by the club members. The Ballad is that literary species which is the most capable to render a content of art and human experience, the most revealing in terms of the dynamics of the imaginary and of the expression of the most certain amplitude, representing after all, according to Radu Stanca, "a new emancipation of the essential against nothingness, of the substance against chaos".

On the other hand, in the patterning of the balladic imaginary, in its dynamic tectonic, there is a kind of contamination, a fertile twinning of the literary genres, because the lyric, the epic and the dramatic fully merge in order to transcribe various emotional states in a regime of total authenticity - an aspect revealed with lucidity and dissociative spirit by Radu Stanca: "The 'balladic' consists precisely of this communication, of this presence of the dramatic inside lyrical poetry. Of course, this presence does not imply the corruption of the lyricism. On the contrary. In the new alloy, the transfiguration is supported not by the floating element, but by the whole stable, substantial coagulum (clot). The adaptation is made not with regard to the dramatic, but to the lyric. The element that transforms during this sublime act is, therefore, particularly the dramatic one. The transfiguration is accomplished under lyrical eyes, whose rays inundate the mirrors."

The importance of the Sibiu Literary Circle for the entire Romanian literature is indisputable and, at the same time, more or less comparable, to that of *Junimea* and the circle around the *Sburătorul* review. The action of the *Manifest* and the *Literary Circle Review* had a modeling and structuring effect by means of the aesthetic options crystallized in the review, but also by means of the literary works themselves that the circle members modeled, as reflections more or less true of such options.

Theatricality and poetic vision

Radu Stanca's lyricism is above all spectacular. Due to their allegorical verve, his lyrics are the staging of existence, revelations of some hidden places, suggestions of a serious carnivalesque which puts together opposites; pathos and irony, fantasy and aesthetic sublimity join in these sumptuous and also austere poems, in which the verse has diamantine glows and the softness of heavy brocade.

Among others, Nicolae Balotă notices Radu Stanca's oracular-fantastical theatricality: "the lyricism becomes dramatic lyricism and we are not surprised that the poet had a predilection for the ballad, for dramatic monologues or interpellations. Subliming his romantic spirit, one of a student of old Heidelberg, Stanca was able to break down both his pathos and irony in a scholarly manner. In his greatest creations – *Buffalo Bill*, *Lamentația Ioanei d'Arc pe rug*, his two odes titled *Ode ale lui Lactantiu pentru iubita sa* - and in others, he took the step that E.A. Poe, the first of the modernists, took in his days, he stepped beyond romanticism, maintaining some of the appearances of the romantic lyricism. Stanca transcends himself, not only in an aesthetic act of supreme grace, but also by what I would call *lyrical representation*. The poet no longer expresses *himself*, but somehow he discovers in his *self* essences that infinitely exceed him. His passion for poetry reminds us of a great poet's admirable words: I wish infinitely much and I get infinitely far from what I want. Pathos and irony. Pathos, in the great lament of Joan d'Arc, the sorrow of the useless, but devouring and ultimately triumphant passion. Irony expressed in great hope, which is also in vain, but human enough, to capture somewhere, at a turn, the post chase bringing a prominent gentleman, the Time".

In his ballads, the poet invents sumptuous sets, characters with symbolic aspect, bearing in their existential and poetic performance the impression of the lyrical ego of his inner appearance, characters that are nothing else but the author's masks, allegorical transvestites' outfits of some impulses and experiences of a certain authenticity. In *Lamentația Ioanei d'Arc pe rug*, the poet captures a wide range of feelings, sensations and emotional impulses. The dominant feeling is that of regret for an unlived life; the absence and the presence, the life and the dream, the pressure of an exceptional destiny which leaves no room for a personal biography are all elements that articulate the universe of emotions and images of the poem: „Îmi vor cuprinde flăcările-ntâi/ Picioarele rănite și grumazul/ Și-apoi, flămânzii șerpi de la călcâi/ Îmi vor zdrobi, cu sunet frânt, obrazul.// Eu voi rămâne însă și pe rug,/ Ca și pe ziduri, dreaptă și nenfrântă,/ Nu voi zvârli blestemul ca pe-un jug,/ Nici nu voi da iertarea ca o sfântă,// Ci, fără lacrimi, ca un om de rând,/ Voi aștepta sub umedele tâmpole/ Ceea ce-i vânt să se preschimbe-n vânt/ Și ceea ce mi-e scris să mi se-ntâmpole// Azi, pentru prima dată-n viața mea/ Și poate pentru cea din urmă dată,/ Mă-mbrățișează tainic cineva/ Și mă învață-n fine să fiu fată (...)// Aceasta-i vina mea: că n-am lăsat,/ Cu gând ascuns, feciori

în preajma porții/ Și-acum, când prima dată un bărbat/ Mă strânge-n brațe, sunt sortită morții.// Vai mie – păcătoasă! – știu acum/ Care-ar fi fost să fie rostul mâinii/ În care-am pus pumnalul plin de scrum,/ În loc să pun, cântând, aluatul pâinii.// Vai mie – păcătoasă! – plâng acum/ Și-mi pare rău că mor când, fermecată,/ Cu flăcările albe mă cunun/ Și, fără remușcări, mă las mușcată”.

Many of Radu Stanca's poems are built on a certain inner tension between the real and the illusive, the mystic and the seeming. What is shown and what is shrouded in unspoken mystery is part of the architecture of a poem like *Doti*, symbolic embodiment of the sacred: „Dă-mi la o parte vâlul și privește!/ Ești primul muritor care mă vezi./ te-ai furișat în templul meu hoștește/ Și-acum, ajuns aici, cunoști și crezi.// Mă socoteai iluzie abstractă,/ Sămânță din străvechiul Amon-Ra./ Și-azi când mă pipăi simți cum se contractă/ În trupul meu de piatră inima.// Descoperă-mă toată, cu-ndrăzneală/ Și lasă-ți palma aspră și pe sânii/ Așa cum stau aici, aproape goală,/ Sunt mai frumoasă ca un imn păgân.// O pulbere de-argint mă împresoară/ Și raze lungi pe frunte-mi cad mănunchi./ Tăcerea care-acum se înfioară/ E sângele ce-mi susură pe trunchi.// Când ochii mi-s închiși, ciulesc urechea,/ Iar când o-nchid pe ea, din ochi pândesc./ Bagă de seamă! Inima, străvechea,/ Ca pe-un etern semnal, mi-o urmăresc!/ Streinule intrat aici hoștește!/ Hoinarule căzut în mreaja mea!/ Ia-mi palma desfăcută și citește:/ Nu soarta mea e-n ea, ci soarta ta!”

By means of sumptuous imagery which is quick to give off an air of old times and theatricality, Radu Stanca's ballads recompose a world long gone and, at the same time, unusual in its quasi-somniloquent representations. Nicolae Manolescu noticed that these poems “make up a strange world of old engravings with medieval burghs and castles, fortress walls and towers from which bell tolls are scattered, with narrow streets on which knights, troubadours, merchants and barons are seen, or black and silent landaus glide. But perhaps the picture is a mere hallucination of the poet who finds his wandering soul in these ghosts. The sorrow poet, after all but a minor elegist, is thus objectivised in the shadows of a Chinese theatre. For him, the Middle Ages are in fact a world of childhood familiarity to which he always returns with nostalgia or grief. All kinds of appearances come out of his soul in the light of the day and he does not have the power or the will to drive them away: they seize hold of him, live on his behalf, love on his behalf, violate unwritten pacts with the devil”.

The passage of time is a recurring theme in the poems of Radu Stanca. Time is seen as an implacable passage, as being torn from oneself, the game of perpetual metamorphosis, in which the compositions of the real appear haunting. In a poem such as *Vulpea*, time feels like a tearing, a devouring evil force that dwindles the poet's being: “Ca tânărul spartan ascund sub haină/ Vulpea furată-a timpului ce trece./ Deși mă mușcă tac și-ndur în taină/ Fără să tulbur lumea ce petrece.// Glumesc nepăsător și râd cu hohot/ În timp ce ea își vâra colții-n mine,/ Simt sângele țâșnind cu mare clocot,/ Dar mă prefac că-s vesel și mi-e bine.// Și mă voi mai preface-n continuare/ Chiar de mi-ar fi durerile-nzecite./ Prea mare-i furtul ca să țip că doare.../ Așa dor visurile împlinite...// Ca tânărul spartan ascund la mine/ O vulpe... care-atâta timp cât tace/ Și mușcă-adânc din carnea mea, e bine.../ Ce-am să mă fac când va porni să latre”.

Radu Stanca's lyrical heroes stand out especially due to their aestheticism, their theatrical ability, excess artificiality or exhibitionistic verve. Pomp and cosmetic shadow, hyperbolic representation and the dramatic posture emerge from the poem *De-aș fi rege*, in

which the poet imagines himself a whimsical and exuberant figure of a king: “Mă iubesc mai mult ca pe oricine/ Și-s gelos pe-oricine mă iubește./ Tot ce mica-mi inimă pofteste/ Mi-e prilej de-orgii și de festine.// Tot ce vreau pe loc mi se-implinește,/ Orice fleac visez îndată-l capăt./ Dragostea de mine n-are capăt/ Și trăiesc din plin, împărătește.// Curtea mea-ncărcată cu portaluri/ Mă desfată-ntruna, zi și noapte./ Până-n cer se-aud, desferecate,/ Chiotele gureșelor baluri,// Până-n codrii-adânci unde dorm nimfe/ Ce tresar din somn de-atâta cântec/ Și-apoi vin, săltând ușor din pântec/ Și-unduindu-și verzile lor limfe (...)// Și-n adâncul nopții fără lege/ Mă iubesc atât de mult, pesemne,/ Că-nvestit cu tainicele semne,/ De-aș fi rege, -aș fi un strașnic rege”.

The love poems by Radu Stanca have quasi-spiritual extras and affective rhythm in which melancholy and emotional suffering are stranded in perfect harmony. The poem *Despărțire*, in which the modulation of the feeling has painful accents, and the expression is impregnated with a refrained pathetic sentiments with a slightly heard emotional vibration: “Ne-ar trebui o mie de ani să reclădim/ Ce-am sfârâmat aseară cu despărțirea noastră/ Și nici atunci nu-i sigur c-am mai putea să fim/ Eu creanga ta de aur, tu frunza mea albastră.// O umbră o să stee mereu între noi doi/ (Noi care-am fost pe vremuri lipiți ca două palme/ Pe pieptul unei moarte) și veșnic între noi/ Vor crește neguri numai în aparență calme.// Cuvântul de-altădată nu-l voi mai folosi,/ Tăcerea fără seamăn de-atunci n-o vom mai tace./ Vom sta mereu ca zeii deasupra și vom fi,/ Cu mâinile pe scuturi, severi și plini de pace (...)// Ca niște ghimpi vom scoate treptat din amândoi/ Aducerile-aminte și vom privi la chipul/ Iubirii care cade șovăitor în noi/ Cum dintr-un țarm de stâncă-ntr-un golf adânc nisipul.// Dar liniștea de-atuncea n-o vom mai regăsi/ Și singuri vom petrece cele din urmă clipe,/ În timp ce pescărușul iubirii va muri,/ Bătând încă o dată din largile-i aripe...”.

No stranger of lavish evocations and elegiac sense of the passage, Radu Stanca is no less of a poet rewriting in his lyrics that ineffable spectacle of existence, in a theatrical and pathetic expression, simultaneously serious and solemn.

Nicolae Manolescu considers Radu Stanca's ballads as false ballads, marked by abundant gestures, by baroque style ornamentation and emotional ceremony not missing some grandiloquence. N. Manolescu also states that the world Radu Stanca portrays is “a strange world of old engravings with medieval burghs and castles, fortress walls and towers from which bell tolls are scattered, with narrow streets on which knights, troubadours, merchants and barons are seen, or black and silent landaus glide. But perhaps the picture is a mere hallucination of the poet who finds his wandering soul in these ghosts. The sorrow of the poet, who is after all but a minor elegist, is thus objectivised in the shadows of a Chinese theatre. For him, the Middle Ages are in fact a world of childhood familiarity to which he always returns with nostalgia or grief. All kinds of appearances come out of his soul in the light of the day and he does not have the power or the will to drive them away [...]”

Buffalo Bill is a ballad with a slightly parabolic substrate, where the verve of the images and the baroque scenery imagine a Far West adventure story with all the necessary props. Thus, there are two levels of understanding the text, a surface one, the poem being regarded as depicting romantic adventures in a rhetorical and asseverative spirit, and another level, of depth, through which one can decipher out a parable of the Time, that “domn de seamă” deceived and robbed by the ballad heroes.

The poetic vision regime takes place in a potential future, in an almost mythical time, a time which reiterates exemplary gestures and which favours the expansion of feelings and

experiences: “Diseară poştalionul va trece prin strâmtoare/ Iar noi îl vom surprinde la locul cunoscut,/ Întocmai ca pe vremea când mânuiam topoare/ Şi flinte ghintuite. Întocmai ca-n trecut.// Azi însă nu de lada cu bani ne vom atinge,/ Nu de mătăsuri fine, podoabe sau găтели,/ Nu vom umbla prin punga rotundă ca o minge/ Şi nici prin buzunare cusute-n căptuşeli.// Azi nu ca să ne-nfigem în saci cu aur braţul/ Ne vom lupta cu ceata de călători calici/ Şi nici ca să mai râdem puţin, zvârlind cu laţul,/ Ne vom ascunde ochii sub măşti, iubiţi amici.// Nu ca să punem mâna pe călătoreala blondă/ Ce tremură şi-şi vâra colierul între sâni,/ Nu ca să scoatem fetei inelul de logodnă,/ Vom răsuci cu vervă pistoalele în mâini.//(...)// Un lucru mult mai nobil, prieteni, astă-seară/ Aduce poştalionul, şi mai de preţ decât/ O călătoreală zveltă, subţire şi sprintăreă/ Sau saci cu bani de aur, umpluţi până la gât”.

The second sequence of text specifies the nature of that “domn de seamă”, the Time, a feared enemy that will be surrounded and trapped with the weapons and the innocence specific to childhood. The imagistic verve and the extreme graphic force of details in which time is materialized are very interesting: „Diseară poştalionul aduce-un domn de seamă,/ Un călător de vază şi-un hoţoman de soi,/ Aduce Timpul – domnul pe care nici o vamă/ Nu l-a putut vreodată întoarce înapoi.// Boierul cu palate şi herghelii în care/ Trag cai de rasă anii albaştrii după ei,/ Un negustor de vinuri, când dulci şi când amare,/ Şi-un hrăpăreţ pe care nu-l pot momi femei.// Bogat din cale-afară şi gras de nu-şi încapă,/ Prin haină i se vede umflată punga grea,/ În degetele-i scurte inelele fac ape/ Şi pe reverul bluzei poartă fâlos o stea.// Pe pântec îi străbate un lanţ de aur vesta/ Şi-un ceas rotund în care, din când în când, zelos,/ Priveşte pe sub gene, ca nu cumva-n acesta/ Să fi rămas o clipă – din veacuri – de prisos.// Când aţipeşte-n jocul căruţei şi în saltul/ Legănător pe care catării suri îl fac,/ El sforăie şi doarme ca orişicare altul,/ El moţăie cuminte, ca orice prostănac.// N-are nimica straniu şi nici la chip nu-i groaznic,/ Atâta doar că n-are pereche de zgârcit,/ Nu e vegheat de nimeni, păzit de nici un paznic,/ Călătoreşte singur şi-i veşnic obosit”.

The last part of poem gives, in terms of farce, of jestery and of carnivalesque, the image of time caught in the “highwaymen’s” throes: “Aşa că nu vă temeţi de el, va fi o luptă/ Din cele mai uşoare, iar de-l vom prinde-n laţ,/ În pânda veşniciei de astă dată ruptă,/ Noi, dintre toţi tâlharii, vom fi cei mai bogaţi.// Căci, dacă punem mâna pe el şi pe comoară,/ Ne-am pricopsit, prieteni, cum nu ne-am aşteptat,/ Şi, dacă punem mâna pe el, în astă-seară,/ Am dat o lovitură cum încă nu s-a dat...”.

As his exegetes noticed, Radu Stanca feels an imperious urge to fantasize, to transcribe with imagistic verve and in a funambulistic drawing, the illusions, chimeras, buffooneries of a spirit who is, though, serious, inclined towards meditation and the ceremonial of utterance that is not without pathos.

We are met by a spiritual fantastic self-portrait in *Corydon*, a poem of spiritualized aestheticism and evocative impression. Radu Stanca’s lyrics echo an undisguised pride, transcribed in elegant images, with the reverberations of recollecting: “Sunt cel mai frumos din oraşul acesta,/ Pe străzile pline când ies n-am pereche,/ Atât de graţios port inelu-n ureche/ Şi-atât de-nflorite cravata şi vesta./ Sunt cel mai frumos din oraşul acesta.// Născut din incestul luminii cu-amurgul,/ Privirile mele dezmiardă genunea,/ De mine vorbeşte-n oraş toată lumea,/ De mine se teme în taină tot burgul./ Sunt Prinţul tenebrelor, eu sunt amurgul...// Nu-i chip să mă scap de priviri pătimăse,/ Prin părul meu vânat, subţiri, trec ca aţa,/ Şi toţi mă întreabă: sunt moartea, sunt viaţa?/ De ce am ciorapi verzi, pentru ce fes de paşe?/ Şi nu-i chip să scap nici pe străzi mărginaşe...”.

The consistency of the lyrical ego emerges from its assessment performed from an aesthetic perspective, its “representativeness” being given by pictorial references. The lyrical ego’s status comes more from the aesthetic sphere than that of the ontological: „Panglici, cordeluțe, nimicuri m-acopăr,/ Când calc, parcă trec pe pământ de pe-un soclu./ Un ochi (pe cel roz) îl ascund sub monoclu/ Și-ntregul picior când pășesc îl descopăr,/ Dar iute-l acopăr, ca iar să-l descopăr...// Cellalt ochi (cel galben) îl las să s-amuze/ Privind cum se țin toți ca scaiul de mine./ Ha ! Ha ! Dac-ați ști cât vă șade de bine/ Sărind, ținând după negrele-mi buze./ Cellalt ochi s-amuză și-l las să s-amuze”. Radu Stanca’s whole cult for artistic values, for the irradiant expressivity of the plastic form that endorses, under the aesthetic species, the seizures of the living can be found in this poem, in a superlative form. Caught in the network of plastic references, with the ontic contours fixed by the frames of the symbolical artistic pressure, the lyrical ego’s portrait is an expression, pushed to the limit, of the “aesthetic autocratism”, as Mircea Muthu would say.

Therefore, the symbolism of the lyrical self is born from a dual strategy, of “objectivity” and of idealization, which the author brings into play. The hero looks like a mirror image, with all plausible conformation to the most insignificant detail, but unreal, unsubstantiated, of ontic consistency. One can even notice the nature of “vision” of the character, its dual status of being half real-half sham, situated between the truthfulness of the representation and the hieratism of the evocation: “C-un tainic creion îmi sporesc frumusețea,/ Fac baie în cidru de trei ori pe noapte/ Și-n loc de scuipat am ceva ca un lapte,/ Pantofi cu baretă mi-ajută zvelțețea/ Și-un drog scos din sânge de scroafă, noblețea.// Toți dinții din gură pudrați mi-s cu aur, /Mijlocul mi-e supt în corset sub cămașe,/ Fumez numai pipe de opiu uriașe,/ Pe brațul meu drept tatuat am un taur/ Și fruntea mi-e-ncinsă cu frunze de laur/ Prin lungile, tainice, unghii vopsite,/ Umbrela cu cap de pisică rânjește/ Și nu știu de ce, când plimbarea-mi priește,/ Când sunt mulțumit c-am stârnit noi ispite,/ Din mine ies limbi și năpârci otrăvite”.

At the end of the poem the author suggests an intimate correlation between the lyrical self and the natural setting, the interference between the two modes of existence, human and physical. Aestheticism, the cult of the precious and preciousity, the mannerism of the forms and the artificiality of some poetic images, all these contribute to enhancing the sense of theatrical expression of poetry (“Din mine cresc crengi ca pe pomi, mățăsoase,/ Și însăși natura atotștiutoare,/ Ea însăși nu știe ce sunt: om sau floare?/ Sau numai un turn rătăcit între case,/ Un turn de pe care cad pietre prețioase?// Sunt cel mai frumos din orașul acesta,/ Pe străzile pline când ies n-am pereche,/ Atât de grațios port inelu-n ureche/ Și-atât de-nflorite cravata și vesta./ Sunt cel mai frumos din orașul acesta”). Of course, one can consider the lyrical stance as another mask, another transvestite compensatory of the lyrical self, that is seeking a refuge from an often aggressive or indifferent reality in art, in poetry, in the harmonious rhythmic of sentences.

The fascination of fantasizing and of epic accolades of the lyrical sentence, as well as the ceremonial cadence of the verse, all these elements largely define Radu Stanca’s poetry, an author whose practice of writing is always accompanied by an intense and clear consciousness of the limits and the benefits of the creative act.

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THE BROKEN MIRROR. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING AND HISTORY IN POST-1989 ROMANIAN LITERATURE

By this essay we are attempting to reveal the tendencies and dimensions of the autobiographical writing in post-1989 Romanian literature, especially considering to the fact that this literary genre has known a remarkable thematic and stylistic development in this period of time.

Thus, we may consider that the ego never ceasing to contemplate itself in the mirrors of the text gains, by this very act of reflection, a certain distance from itself and tends to no longer recognize itself in its personal past or in its personal text. From this point of view, the autobiographical writing in post-1989 Romanian literature is not the invocation of an ideal image, of a mythical projection of the own ego, but that of an ego endlessly searching its own identity.

We must underline, on the other hand, that the aspect of speculation and self-speculation are “immediate” data of the autobiographical writing, as the impressions, sensations and perceptions are continuously subdued to a an act of “directing”, to a scenery of the present, thus being, to put it this way, “presentified”.

The diary is, beyond any doubt, a document, a type of writing in which the world, with its polymorphic landscape, meets the subjectivity of the one who is writing. It can be asserted that this literary genre has known, in the epoch we are discussing about, the power to reveal a time that has irremediably passed, an agony of history, thus offering an image of the world and of the ego of a clear authenticity.

We must remark that the interest in the literary work with autobiographical valences has been considerable after 1989. And this is due to the reader’s curiosity, to the temptation of looking in the backstage of the writers’ life or, maybe, because of an irrepressible need of deconstructing the myth of the creative spirit’s figure, whose height seems more acceptable, more human as it is drawn by the autobiographical writing.

From this perspective of revealing, denuding the inner mechanisms of an existence, the diary produces a double effect – mythical and un-mythical – due to the fact that, on one hand it imposes a central figure, a *character* – that ego who objectifies its desires and frustrations, witnessing its own role – but, on the other hand, the diary reveals, in directly determined by the lucidity of the one who writes it, the narrator-ego’s imposture, it reduces to their true dimensions his gestures and emotions, looking with the necessary suspicion for the genuine speech at his moral status. The diary’s freedoms and servitudes derive exactly from the relations between the interiority and exteriority that are so hard to be determined, from the labile balance that the diary – an impure genre, lacking prestige – is assuming, thus situating itself in an uncertain space where confession, the return to intimacy and objectivity, the *exit from the self*, beneficially coexist.

We must, though, consider the fact that the diary is an ambiguous literary genre, defined by its authenticity and sincerity condition but having, still, a somehow decorative form, a conventional, artificial aspect because, between the moment of self contemplation and that of the transposition of this contemplation an period of reflection, of reorganization

of random gestures interferes. In other words, between the time of confession and the time of existence a relation of inner-determination and even of breaking is settled.

From this point of view, the diary is more like an attempt of purification than a genuine self-portrait, an invocation of an ideal image more than the evocation of an ego endlessly searching the degraded contour of its personality in the sketched figure from the strictest actuality. Undoubtedly, the diary is a document, a writing with a depositional aspect in which the echoes of the world, with their direct references, meet the subjectivity of the one who is constantly writing himself in the most proper way. It is obvious that this kind of literature has decisively contributed to the knowledge of the unseen face of some creators, just as it has facilitated the reconstruction of some events, physiognomies, pacts and even revealed the mysterious side of some creator's works.

In the Romanian post-1989 literature, the autobiographical works' abundance of reception may be explained by quite exact social causes or motivations. The resurrection of this "boundary literature" after 1989 is totally impressive. In this post-communist period are published intimate diaries (Ion Negoitescu, *Straja Dragonilor*, Paul Goma, *Culorile curcubeului*, Mircea Zăciu, *Jurnal*, Dumitru Țepeneag, *Un român la Paris*, Andrei Pleșu, *Jurnalul de la Tescani*, George Tomaziu, *Jurnalul unui figurant*, și, mai recent, Gabriel Liiceanu, *Ușa interzisă*), memoirs (Alexandru Paleologu, *Minunatele amintiri ale unui ambasador al golanilor*), confessions (Virgil Nemoianu, *Arhipelag interior*, Ion Ioanid, *Închisoarea noastră cea de toate zilele*), books covering an extremely vast thematic spectrum: the experience of detention, the communist jail system, the political or literary life, the history and its avatars, the cultural universe and its percentage of utopia or purification, etc.

The explanation for the great audience that the diary literature has had after 1989 may be found in the radical changes of the reader's expectancy horizon. The diaries and memoirs published after 1989 also have, as it has been noticed, a compensatory function, conditioned by their ability of producing aesthetical, historical, political and even personal revelations, by the transposition of some privileged experiences in the true meaning of the term.

The autobiographical literature is meant to satisfy some documentary exigencies (concerning the literary life, the political system, the evolution of consciousness) as well as some aesthetical ones (style, manner of portraying the "characters", psychological dynamics etc.). It may even be said that these works also possess the role of being mirrors of the exterior and inner existence, documents and substitutes of real and personal life.

But we must also point out the fact that this mirror is no longer harmonious and utopian, but lucid and fragmented. It is a broken mirror that reveals the most contradictory dimensions of the being and of the reality. From this point of view, a totally revelatory work is Mircea Zăciu's *Journal*, a diary that is both the document of a life and of intellectual's destiny.

A genuine vocation for literariness sets the critic initiatives of Mircea Zăciu in the space of the literary project; this is how the temptation of an impressionism permanently tempered by reason may be explained. What surprises the reader in Mircea Zăciu's pages of literary criticism is exactly the diversity of the textual strategies that are directed. Some portraits have an evoking pregnancy, an affective and cold drawing, lyrical elevation and rigor, like in the case of Agarbiceanu: "When I think of Agarbiceanu I can only see him as a peasant working on his land, under the unforgiving rainfall or under the sun spears. He was, until his last breath, a primitive energy and a simple heart. His humanity was not cold but harsh, and

this is exactly what made his charm: I was touching the surface of an old tree under which unknown substances were running, extracted by very deep roots unknown to us”. Just as significant is the sober, precise, drawing of a balzacian convention representing Duiliu Zamfirescu: “Around 1883 a young man about 25 years old, beautiful and elegant, was living at the *Metropol* hotel in Bucharest in a modest room. The neighbors imagined him to be the wealthy son of some renter, recently returned from abroad and expecting, in the crowded capital, a job corresponding to his social status and demands”.

The critic’s meditation maintains the same acuteness and accuracy, whether it is about the text itself or about the “text of the world”. “The joy of reading” that Eugen Simion was talking about, refers to the joy of discovering the landscape of reality, while the aesthetical register of the critical discourse detaches from formal rigor, thus achieving affective reflexes of sufficient pregnancy. The mobility of the view is conjugated, in Mircea Zăciu’s pages, with the mobility of the style, a mixture of grave meditation, literary reference, retractile reflex and emotional expansion. No less expressive is the description of the Romanian landscape rhetoric, in a page from *Colaje*: “The picturesque of the Romanian landscape. From here comes our need of light and color, recognized by Iorga and Camil Petrescu, two spirits so opposed otherwise”.

The travel literature of Mircea Zăciu is, beyond its biographical-documentary value, a true file of a temperament, but also a document of the soul that seeks, often with inclemency, certain facts and rigorous forms in a world obedient to all kinds of fluctuations. All these paths leading to nowhere and all these dimensions of Mircea Zăciu’s personality, this uninterrupted tendency of turning into literature are found in his *Diary*, that reconstitutes, in a pessimistic tone, one of the darkest periods of Romanian communism, dominated by terror, absurd and lack of horizon. Mircea Zăciu’s notes often have the dynamism and soberness of those belonging to a reporter, precise and elliptical, recording gestures, physiognomies, situations conferred by the writer with relevance by the mark trace of personal experience, sometimes more relaxed, some other times more pregnant in the diary’s text. In this dark landscape of the *satanic decade*, the critic and the diarist feel the need of a protective space, a place where the writer’s self seeks refuge in order to compensate the misery and precarity of the outside world; the universe of the books – as an ideal refuge – and *the home* – the place of meditations, are such spaces where the intellectual retreats voluptuously (“At home. Small irritations. Abundant snow, then a wave of hot air that in a few hours melts everything. While was in the plane, as the ceiling was being reduced, I saw the whole plain under the snow, it seemed to me like we were landing on a polar landscape, something like *ice station*...After the meal, a relaxing sleep. The feeling that I am again *at home*, but also the fear that I will soon be losing this small, secured, place. I realize now that there is no other place where I feel better than here, in my room, in front of the window opened to the same landscape in three dimensions, that I wanted to ask Vergulescu to paint (or draw) to me”).

Another theme of the *Journal* is that of keeping the identity by the intellectual who assumes, by refusing the compromises with the political power, the exemplary and at the same time simple destiny of the one marginalized by the officials, being humiliated, isolated and separated from those *alike him*. From this perspective, of the attempt to regain the personal identity, the diary becomes, in a way, a writing with a compensatory feature, a purifying exercise, as well as the intellectual’s manner of decoding his own condition. An interesting page of the diary is the one where the uncertainty of the critic, his inability of

choosing between leaving the country and staying in a space he no longer feels as loaded with positive connotations, as *at home*. Here, in this fragment, skepticism and the affective vibration, the lucidity of introspection and the tension of the impossibility of making a choice reunite: “Two weeks then, of stories, relaxation and tension at the same time: am I *staying* or am I going back? Nervous pending between the two alternatives, anger, anxiety, pain and affection, doubt and weaker certainties. Looser. The return of the looser. None of the worlds is *mine*. None of the solutions convinces me. The single one is probably the one I do not have enough courage for. So that, torn apart and exhausted, I came back. Obviously, from the moment I crossed the border, I regretted. Maybe I would have regretted the other option too. I don’t know. Why should I go on wondering? I leave myself in faith’s will”.

Written in the register of authentic and programmatic sincerity, even with the risk of provoking the animosity of some “characters” that would find their names and personality painted here, Mircea Zăciu’s *Journal* also brings to light the spectacle of cowardice and moral resignation, perceived by the author with an inclement view, around him, with all sorts of protagonists; sad, the spectacle of moral degradation, turns people into real puppets, lacking personal initiatives, victims and assassins at the same time in an absurd totalitarian regime. In this vitiated atmosphere, mined by suspicion and disbelief, the author notes his anxieties, his depressions, his uncertainties. The obsession of leaving, of isolation and loneliness is extremely pregnant, explored with a non-concessive eye: “Now the weather has become better, spring is in the air, the complete light that should persuade me to write, to enterprise something. O painful consciousness of futility. Nobody around me, no one to need me, to encourage me, to offer me affection. At last, I called me, the pretext of an illness, some apathy, a distant air, there’s nothing for me to hope for”. Or, in another place: “A little balance, after the marasmus of the last days. Rainy weather, a wet heat. No news about my folks. Like they have completely forgotten me. A strange feeling of being left, that I have to get used to. Honestly speaking, I exaggerate, I let myself deliberately in such a “neurotical spoilage” (...) Hope, more than anytime, appears to me as perverse. I cannot put my trust in her, in the speculations that are made, in the little or huge illusions. On the contrary, the feeling of a more a more ferocious reclusion”.

Projected on the background of a demonized, agonic, history, the narrative self, as a witness implied in its own development, assumes, by his very personal writing, his own ethical and aesthetical dignity. The literary turn and the acuity of the biographical detail are the elements that join their semantic energies in Mircea Zăciu’s book/books. The time and history fragments that the Professor’s books contain in their substance coagulate the meaning of an exceptional destiny, that never detached from the reality, but, on the contrary, invested in the personal writing – of great availability and refinement, sober and elegant, the very avatars of his own sensibility, taken through so many trials – initiatory or not –, malefic or positively charged.

Absorbing the speculation and self-speculation in a somehow “transfiguratory” converging point, any journal proposes an image of the *ego* and of the *world* that is significantly faked by the auctorial intentions of the writer. The impressions, the sensations, the perceptions of the past are subject to a certain “direction” of the writing’s present that distorts, motivates or recalibrates the facts, or even aestheticizes them, in a certain sense, thus giving them an ideal contour. “Styling” is, actually, imminent danger to any diary, whether the author wants it or not. A simple mask or expiation, a justification or purifying return to the

own self as an alternative to a terrifying world, the journal conveys in its own structure the fragility of *minor* notes and the benefits of an *essential* speech about the personal self.

Dumitru Tepeneag is between those who have turned writing into a form of resistance to the dogmatic, oppressive reality of communism, a writer who adopted the manner of “inconformism” (sometimes displayed with a didactical emphasis) in an epoch when others were living from wages gained by the opportunism and cowardice of collaborating with the “regime”. *A Romanian in Paris*, the book that appeared in 1993, comprising diary pages from 1970-1972, begins with some explaining notes about the “need for a journal”, about the interior or contextual mechanisms that have led him to self-analyzing notes, substituting the fictional writing’s objectivity (obviously relative itself, given the dreamily principle on which the epic pages of D. Tepeneag are built), with the authenticity of the writing about himself and with himself: “And this because I realized, I understood why I need such a diary. I don’t mention the (relative) loneliness, the desire, the curiosity of watching myself in the diary after many years. There is something else then, something more profound. In what concerns literature, I write very few, or, in any case, I wrote extremely few: and in the little I write I impose to myself a certain style that interdicts not only the direct confession but also the expression of some ideas, of some opinions on life, society, etc; many of these ideas are, I think, interesting, at least in some of their aspects (although not necessarily original, of course!) or come out of a tension, in a context that is later lost, and it is a pity sometimes, because this context, my psychological status in which this ideas appear, is more interesting than the ideas themselves which, expressed nude, are erased, evaporate, I would say, like some medusas thrown on the shore”.

In these considerations, as we have seen, fiction and non-fiction are put face to face, literarization (which does not allow the writer to enter fields such as politics, sociology etc.) and the nude description of the personal consciousness’s avatars. On the other hand, the diary is not just an intimate document meant for “personal” usage for Dumitru Tepeneag, it is explicit, declared to be destined to publication, in spite of some “stylistic deficiencies” or of some “more usual expressions” (that after all are related to the need for authenticity assumed by the author of the journal). Also, the journal does not represent the strict notation of events from a certain day; on the contrary, its chronology is fluctuant, sinuous, with remembers of the more or less distant past, with empty spaces, minor mistakes, temporal breaks or deviations from the “subject”, all these meanders of writing being part of a true “direction” of the subjective inner-determination. Dissimulation is absorbed in the plasma of the autobiographical discourse, which approaches, by this game of the temporal perspectives, the figurative strategies of fiction. That is why for the writer the self-speculative value of his own diary is relative, even doubtful, considering the fact that the diarist’s pen is unable to access acutely and exactly the immediate flow of consciousness, the pregnancy of the self’s status of *now*: “And secondly this journal will not be able to be at least a reliable mirror of the state I am on that precise day (I am writing the date like I am numbering chapters), especially in the first pages I will be tempted to come back, to give as being that moment ideas, opinions that have passed through my mind at a different time, to narrate events that took place in a different period and to describe men I have seen in other times (although in the last two cases I will try to be more... correct), in a word to “update” this diary that, after all, is holding the place of that realistic and traditional work I am not “allowed” to write”.

The Parisian tour of Dumitru Tepeneag (between 1970 and 1972) is marked by the meetings with Romanian and foreign writers, reading impressions, reactions to events from the country, suspicions and hopes, disillusionments and outbursts of disbelief in his own destiny. Not a few of the narrated scenes have an amount of savor, but also the harshness of some *sur le vif* moral dissections. A portrait like that of Breban suggests a very clear characterization pregnancy, but also ability of moral modeling by which the evoked person is turned into a character. (“Hard to be put up with, this Breban! He creates around him a stupid tension that makes you feel uncomfortable all the time. All my nonchalance goes to hell in front of him, I even found myself—even here, in Paris—”) making concessions to him, wanting to please him. He is rude, lacking the sense of humor, and when he wants to please the other, when he makes a compliment or praises somebody, he does it so bad that not only he does not succeed, but he ends up offending you (...). Eventually it is exactly this “hahalerism” that makes him funny to me. He is susceptible, but not disbelieving. His vanity does not stand the others not to like him, so it is touching to see him trying to avoid guilt by showing off, and with such conviction that you sit and listen to him amazed”)

What is surprising, maybe, in Tepeneag’s diary (as well as in other pages of memoirs signed by him) is their tonality, half built, half spontaneous; the autobiographical assertions are thus at the intersection of the “hypocrisy” of the one who knows he is being watched (knowing that he will be read sometimes) of the outbursts of indignation, passion or revolt that often give color and form to the notation. The writer himself recognizes this paradoxical mixture of spontaneity and “censorship”, resulting, maybe, from a much too insistent insertion of the exterior, of the political, social, etc, in the disadvantage of the interiority, of the subjective flow (“The last pages are way too observatory, too exterior. Some psychological reactions (orientations) are kept under silence, some self-censored opinions (not on political criteria). Only the first notebook is somewhat more interesting. The fact is that, finally, this diary of mine does not sound either genuine or shaped enough: there are confusions, hard expressions, sometime platitudes. And it seems like all the time I had a break (self-censorship?)”). The author’s status is, simultaneously, that of an actor and of a spectator of his own gestures and attitudes, directed and studied for a long time; author and character of his own writing, Dumitru Tepeneag features on the diary’s stage naturally, without hesitation, while the writing that notes the interior reality’s data is sometimes dynamical, prolific, or plain, of a studied lack of form. Beyond the “theatrical” aspect of some notations, we cannot ignore the moral reflexes that the diary pages often receive. (In *Failed Trip* the theme becomes truly moralizing. Here the text’s mirror is no longer limited to the recording of the personal avatars, but turns them in a very sensitive barometer of the reactions of the others, even if this is not, as the author himself warns us, a “book of vengeance”). In brief, the diary pages of Tepeneag are dominated by an uninhibited existential conduit, sometimes by too much freedom of tone (see the very acid appreciations about Stefan Baci, Breban, Miron Radu Paraschivescu). Between his directing appetite of “building” his “characters’ ” destiny and the temptation of authentic speech, often utopian, Dumitru Tepeneag’s diary pages have the significances of a catharsis disguised under the effluvia of irony and self-irony.

The undetermined literary space occupied by the intimate expression thus reunites the resources of existence and of the aesthetical experience, the temptation of the self’s idealization and the need of directness, settling a *fiction of the autobiographical* that is meant to crystallize, in a coherent image, marked by the signs of authenticity, amorphous gestures,

scattered experiences, unfocused details. Any journal has, somehow, its starting point in an utopian hypothesis – it attempts to transform the biographical accident, the meanders of an existence, into a destiny, it has the ambition of conferring an aesthetical and ethical contour to a life, coagulating in the written letter fugitive emotions, frustrations, resentments and aspirations. The saving function of the diary notes is amplified once more if the author of these notes is living under a totalitarian regime; the journal then turns into an exit spot for a continuously aggressed and threatened being, the expression no longer translates only the flow of everyday experiences, but also the sub-textual terror lying in the self's deepest layers. In this case, the depositional value of the journal is indubitable and, therefore, *The Witness Wall*, the title of Florenta Albu's pages of diary (1994) does not seem to be random at all. The wall is, first of all, a metaphor of the collective loneliness, an obsessive metaphor of a demonized history, but also a sign of the absolute loneliness of the individual being, mutilated by the trials of a devouring, absurd, time: "Today, the end of the year; the history of our time in front of the same yellow wall, wall of punishments, for all the moments of meditation and contemplation, for all the attempts of liberating myself at least here, at myself, with myself; I listen to symphonic music in front of the obsession-wall of everyday executions, by the moments of escape from everyday reality, " and by those of ecstasy... Thus, *history* was becoming a *caprice*: The thought history, watched from a distance, put up with more in yourself; The Caprice-History, my Saturday and Sunday caprice, when I took the pause of sitting on this chair, in front of the witness wall, full of all the fingerprints through the years; as if I was guessing my way, sleepwalking, in a dream – in the real, putting my climbing palms on the walls of the closed. And the proof – the fingerprint of cowardice, of deposition, of pain, of the state of grace, and the repeated attempt of escalating the closed – the writing. *The Witness Wall!* Putting my hands over my eyes, looking beyond, the day, the crimes of the day, by the fingerprint of the innocent palms – complice, dirty of the same residues, every-day blood; "everyday caprice" – this diary".

Florenta Albu's diary is individualized, of course, in the expressive frames of the genre, by the sincerity of the notations, by the true exasperation, drawn in a confessional pregnancy; the writing that embodies aesthetically the author's emotions is, in its turn, a crisped writing, where words intersect, reflect each other, express their inability of communicating or simply the consciousness of having to obey to the limits of a dogma, of some constraining models, that they are responsible in front of the "town's voice" – almighty, festivist, itself adapted to the megalomania of the Golden Age. The perversion of the word, its contamination with the virus of ideology, the alienation of the being by the reductive socialization of its linguistic means – are all recurrent themes of this journal in which, at one time, the author ends up by envying the death-mutes, exactly because, being unable to appeal to words, they are assumed to be unobliged to put them in the service of the official ideology. ("Happy are the death and mute! Do they know the world they are in, is this quintessence of the epoch translated into signs to them? I remember: Bucharest used to host, at one time, I don't know what congress of the death and mute persons. The city was full of people who were making signs, it seemed like I has bumping all the time into their accolades around the ears, into the wheels of their hands or the points stabbed in the air, into their linear grimaces... Then I envied them: they were living with no concerns, in their apolitical death and muteness, they were mastering a tabu-language. Even they were to envy, here/now, the death and the mute!").

The diary, as a reductive mirror of a life's avatars generally has a referential value; it is a document that attempts to reconstitute the figure of the one who is saying *I*, to give him back the ontological contour by a sum of details, gestures, emotions. If there is, in *The Witness Wall*, a space of reference, a certain "local color" and a temptation of authenticity, all these elements of the diary's legitimacy as a literary genre are somehow absorbed in the very well defined contour of *intimacy*, as, somehow, too less of the biographical self is revealed to us here: the everyday gestures, the relations with the others, the biological tribulations, etc., are transcribed in a hurry, without being invested with essence. On the contrary, the author exposes, by a clear analytical impulse, the resources of the profound self, thus detaching emotions that feature exemplarity, intimate experiences and imposing a nervous writing, not at all effeminated or comfortable, a certain ethical conduit, the profile of a writer threatened by the caprices of History, constantly aggressed by the meanders of an epoch in which the lack of law or lawlessness have substituted legality, the moral normality. By living in this similiarcercal space that had received the dimensions of an entire society, that had invaded the consciousness and had transformed people into puppets whose moves and thoughts were imposed by the center, the writer's self feels eroded by the overwhelming feeling of ugliness, of disgust, that is gradually insinuated, like a metastasis, threatening the integrity of the organism and, as a last moment alternative, by the "national longing". The ugliness therefore becomes the mark of a society where the personal initiative is amputated, and even the idea of individuality is melted in the anonymity of the masse, "the man without features" being the symbol of a time of contrasts in which megalomania and misery interact: "I am sick of going on, especially after a journey: I am even sicker to restart, to write, to welcome winter and another year of my winter, other sadness and apocalyptic lucidities. The same closed road and the same ugliness. Yes, this ugliness, this sublime, diabolical Romanian UGLINESS, starting to overwhelm the LONGING (DORUL), our dear, untranslatable DOR, our ineffable state of grace. I substitute *the dor* with the *ugliness*. They have the same philosophical value, uncomfortable, cataract (...) I am sick of myself, of you, of the world and sick of ugliness, of the sublime emptiness, of the EMTY-UGLINESS, the philosophy of our self- the place and the time and the faith".

It is obvious that such a diary is not one of "light" and comfort: on the contrary, there is, in almost any of its pages, a taste of ending and of the end, a feeling of the lack of hope, an overwhelming sadness and exhaustion of living and writing. The will of singularity in a world where all people must be alike and obey to a dogma gives the author the distinct sensation of the absurde. The condition of Sisif, placed in the "Ceausescu era" is just that: to want to formulate and identity in a space that does not tolerate individualities, that promotes a single "Personality", reducing the others to the condition of anonyms, of the ontological amorphous. The reflexes of referenciality, concurrent with the valences of the self's intimacy, clearly appear in the portraits from this book; the characters are thus placed in their natural world, relevant details of their features being cut or their moral dimension being extracted from a detail of physiognomy: "Today, X seems to have decreased, sitting with the big hat pressed on his head (it is freezing in the office) and his small beard expresses fear, presumption, the sense of measure or of ridiculous and measure that have always kept him in a type of his own in the epoch".

Radiography of an epoch, exercise of moral self-exploration, document of the fear and of existential ugliness in the "Ceausescu epoch", Florenta Albu's diary assumes the metaphor

of the *wall* as a symbol of expiation and of resurrection, of purifying suffering. These diary pages confess the temptation of liberation by the means of writing, but also the clear desire of abolishing the constraints of History by the soteriological exercise of confession.

Of a great interest in the field of autobiographical writing proves to be Gabriel Liiceanu's diary *The Forbidden Door*, in which the philosophical meditation allies with the direct observation of the world, in a sober and plastic writing. *The forbidden door* is a book that seeks to reorder the events under the determination of their fundamental meaning that gives life back the quality of destiny. It is truly difficult to explain the meaning of existence in the matrix of gestures, facts and events more or less random that the being assumes, under the empire of implacable hazard. On the other hand, the author is aware of the missions and servitudes of this literary genre: "The journal is the most tied form of collaboration with life ever given to you. It is a sort of reverence in front of who-knows-who, a way of showing that what was given to you is not unimportant to you. On the other hand, the fact that you have received something without knowing it may become the source of an infinite protest. From here the ambiguity of any diary that mixes courtesy, tenderness and gratefulness, with yells, accusations and blasphemy".

For Gabriel Liiceanu the autobiographical writing is no longer a mask, but liberation, a sort of controlled delirium of the words in which the being may give a more pure sense to its own dimensions. The diary thus becomes a sort of therapy, a way of establishing the balance of the being, of setting the metabolism of its own destiny: "By reading these pages, I suddenly realized that *I had kept silence well* for so many years. The inability of *expressing* myself obviously made unhappy, but what has stopped me from talking freely until now was exactly the "conscious feeling of personal insufficiency". The venom gathered inside me hadn't reached the necessary concentration in order for it to become a cure. I was simply not ripped yet. I had to know the fear of meat and the last spleen of the soul, to set apart from people that took away parts of me, to bury friends, to live a revolution and to have the shock of meeting my people, to tear myself apart and hate myself, to drown myself in regrets and to still want, once again, to gather myself back. Without all these, any page written in my own name is nothing but an enormous chat".

A meditation on the personal destiny and a reflection on the destiny of the others, the diary pages of Gabriel Liiceanu have the force of a deposition and, also, a very well defined aesthetics, by the power of words, by the expression's power of ruling over the objects, of inscribing them in the sphere of literariness.

It may be said that the autobiographical writing had, in post-1989 Romania, a very vast echo, by the interest for the document, for the backstage of some creators' destiny and by the temptation of recovering the meanings of history. By this autobiographical dimension, the Romanian literature rallies to the other Eastern or Central European literatures, primarily by the ethical theme concerning the condition of the writer and of the individual in general, put in front of a hysterical history.

TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN ȘTEFAN AUG. DOINAȘ'S POETRY

The authentic resurrection of the lyrism, proceeding the cultural and literary “freezing” from the years of “the obsessive decade” produces itself, as it is known, simultaneously with the '60s Generation, anticipated by Labiș and represented especially by: Nichita Stănescu, Cezar Baltag, Ioan Alexandru, Marin Sorescu, Ana Blandiana, Ion Gheorghe etc. The poetry of this generation imposes the aesthetic value; therefore the beautiful is seen as the main element of the literary work, returning to the eternal themes of the lyrism, treated in a more intense, subjective tonality, where the biographical rhythms of the ego configure themselves as an interior replica to the existential or cosmical rhythms. In this way a very important and fertile mutation takes place, at the level of the values; the mutation from the festive and exterior epic to an interiorised lyrism and from the patriotically-dogmatic impetuses to the confessional notation that seeks to agree with the private being of the creator with the hard circumstances.

A different vision, taken from the experience of the '60s Generation, brings the literature and especially the poetry of the '70s, that resides under the sign of two onto poetic imperatives: that of the fiction, of the revaluing of the referentiality from the perspective of the fictionality and that of literature and also on a different direction, the one of the moral exigence, maybe much more felt and assumed than before.

The map of the Romanian poetic neo-modernism is, therefore, one of an immense diversity, being made up of a plurality of lyrical voices, which have adhered to an ontopoetic similar vision, with natural nuances and differences.

The appeal to the authentic lyrical tradition, the use of the imperative belonging to the aesthetic's autonomy, the return to poetics, in other words and also in the same time the appeal to a subjacent ethical motivation of the lyrical discourse, all these features of the Romanian poetic neo-modernism are found at these poets who valued both the candour and the lucidity, the paths of the authentic feeling and the moral interrogation of an expressive, acute echo.

Obviously, the neo-modernist poetry cannot be understood at its real dimension if we neglect the role of certain groups or of some creators who announced it. In this context we must underline the importance that the Literary Circle from Sibiu and its *Manifest* have had and with its help it formulates expressive and aesthetic ideals.

The Literary Circle from Sibiu represented, in the literary scene of the the end of the Second World War, the moment of the aesthetic's resurrection and of the cultivation of human and cultural values taken from the critical descendance of Maiorescu and of course, that of Lovinescu. Nicolae Balotă notices that „The Literary circle's aesthetism represents the cultivation of the aesthetic and in the same time its subversion. Very modern, without reaching the extreme of the avangarde, which tried to premeditatedly undermine the artistic, to produce an explosion of the art, succeeding to produce only beautiful aesthetic fireworks, the aesthetism of the Literary Circle would anchor art in a sphere that overcame the artistic, and in the same time disanchor the art letting it float at will on the sea of the aesthetic freedoms, playing - through irony, parody and loose charm – with the risks of art's self annihilation”.

The poets from the Literary Circle of Sibiu started from the premise of the fundamental ambiguity of the poetic act, in whose chemistry can be found, with equal rights and fervour, the solemnity of the diction and the instinct from this perspective, with a major significance.

It can be stated that in Ștefan Aug. Doinaș's literary being coexist, in perfect harmony, two apparently distinct dimensions, but actually cosubstantial, in the way that they are the fruit of the same poetical and philosophical options, continuously followed throughout time; first, there is a rigorous, applied and foremost firm consciousness of the poetry, and second of all, there exists a poetic vision, that is a writing practice entirely harmonious and coherent. There can also be stated that in Ștefan Aug. Doinaș's poetry, coexist two complementary impulses, a starting point of returning to tradition, towards the traditional lyrical resources, and on the other hand, a temptation of an expressivity found under the sign of neo-modernism.

Always tried by the selfdefining temptation, of self explanation, the poet wanted to impose several longlasting truths, in the virtue of an essential classicism, subordinating his apollinic temper. Ștefan Aug. Doinaș's lyrics come to life because of an impetuous need of harmony and judgement, having its origins in the ever-lasting values of poetry, which are transcribed with a "humbleness" that gives meaning to this "major epigonism" to which the poet refers to in an essayistic passage: "The great truths have already been said and the role of the artist today is that of offering a new elaboration". The poet, generally speaking the artist, resumes the great truths and myths of humanity, denying himself the ego of the invention and assuming only that sort of exterior, formal ingenious, of remodelling, rewriting, remaking of original models. This idea about poetry as a result of the interference of pre-existing texts, as a final product can be, in Marian Papahagi's vision, a decisive argument of Doinaș's trademark, made up of a suggestive combination between tradition and modernity.

On the other hand, between the poetics and the poietics of Ștefan Augustin Doinaș's correspondences, even the equivalences are as revealing as possible. Therefore, to a conception about the neo (or post) classical poetry, that relies on the exemplarity of the places, on an expressive rigour and formal apollinism, corresponds a poem of a large openness to the idea, marked by an "elevated" vision (Ovidiu Cotruș) concerning the existence. The exultance of the contingent, the polychrome, proteic elocquence of the real reabsorb themselves in these poems in the essentialism and the nostalgia of the original. The appeal to the archetype is, basically the resort that makes the poetic mechanism function, as well as the tectonique of the imaginary, offering an aesthetic functionality through a complete harmony, noticed among others by Al. Cistelean: "Its contact (Doinaș's poetry, n.n.) is not done at the lower level of appearances, but at the ideal one, at that of the essence. It is not the world that bridges the poet's relationship with the absolute, but, on the contrary, it is the one that finds a middle way between the poet and the sphere of the concrete".

In other words, the movement of semantic relevance that generates Doinaș's lyrism is not an inductive one, but more a deductive one, as long as the poet, as any literary being, but also touched by the orphism's tremor, overlaps the scenery, to the empiric reality, a poetical or an antological preestablished model, that the relief of the world, more or less accidentally, folds, this excluding in the most clear way the sensorial intensity, the exultance or the affective turmoil. In this way, the model is the one that dictates the shape of the vision, offering it a superior, elaborate substance, put under the sign of rationality.

It is significant the fact that a first contact with Doinaș's text might give us the impression of a lyricism consacreated to the surfaces of the world, of significance, therefore, extensive, and

still without a dimension of depth, of the final significances, of originality. A closer, more rigorously concentrated look upon the poetic text will certify the fact that it is such a dimension, of ontological depths edits the highest relevance to this poetry freed from the impurities of the sensation, but not less covered with the existential shiver and the rethorism - rather subtextual - of the ethical interrogation.

Because of these reasons, the subtle game between pre-text (the poetical model) – text and subtext is quite revealing for the author's poetical impulse, the semantic and ontological accent shifting, in the clearest possible way, from the text to the subtext, the poet practising a rethoric of allusion and deduction, transforming the tones in semitone leading to the fading of the colours in the infinite chromatic possibilities of the nuance. So, it is not out of line if we compare Doinaş's poetry to the posture of an iceberg, as, often, the visible part, that of apparent significances of the poems is also the narrowest concerning importance and quantity, the most eloquent and essential significances being hidden from our sight.

In fact, the formal classicism of this poetry may be associated with a temptation of the expressionist abysses, the song of the "origins" being intoned by the poet with an exquisite harmony and melodic rigor, and thus Doinaş's poetry is less anchored in the world's geography, extracting its benefits from a continuous swinging between underworld spaces and the transcendental spaces of thinking, of ideality, so that Doinaş's vision is, on one hand, elemental, plasticized as a return to the origins, and as an ascension to the heights, a spiritual ascension, on the other hand, in verses attempting to find the roots of the being, while at the same time drawing it an essential, utopian and revealing contour: "So many things are soaked in the origins/ with their more sensible part that the rest/ which seldom is snowed in our palm/ I am the guest from the threshing spikes".

An eloquent confession of this interference between tradition and modernity is the poem *The wild boar with silver fangs*, the most read and quoted creation belonging to Ștefan Aug. Doinaş. Of course, this does not mean that it is the best understood. An interesting fact is that the author himself offers the most authorised commentary for his poem, descifring a dense network of meanings and symbols that intermingle with the poetical text.

Doinaş's balad has a double intention. First of all, the poem must be seen as a lyrical scenario with a dramatical-lyrical structure, with the well-known conflicting moments and with a clearly defined denouement, but in the same time, the creation also has very strong symbolical connections, which contribute to the enhancement of the most significant complexity.

Written in July 4th, 1945, the poem illustrates the author's belief, but also the artistic ideals that animated the members of the Literary Circle of Sibiu (Doinaş, Radu Stanca, Ioanichie Olteanu etc.). The final form of the poetic text appeared for the first time in the volume *The Man with the compass* in 1966 and it differs only a little from the form printed in „The magazine of the Literary Circle”, numbers 6-8 from 1945.

The meanings and the aesthetic functionality of Doinaş's poetry are no strangers to the programtic ideas stated by Radu Stanca in the article *The Resurrection of the balad*, where it is shown that in ballads, the lyricism configures itself under the indirect shape of a disguise, and the baladesque represents the very presence of the dramatic element within the lyrical poem. In the balad itself the dramatical procedures and ways (the lines, the dialogue, the conflict, etc.) have a first class rank, the author manifesting not by involvement, but, on the contrary by objectivation and impersonality.

For the members of the Literary Circle from Sibiu the return to the literary specie of the balad represented, as it is known, a polemical attitude towards the pre-eminence of subjectivity and of the subconscious from a considerable part of the Romanian interwar poetry. On the other hand, the baladesque claims a higher intellectuality, involves a laborious, rigorous and harmonious intellectuality, the aesthetic being doubled by a series of ethical, philosophical and religious values.

At a first level of the reading, the poem seems a simple balad with a cinegetic subject, which is marked by the presence of a specifical vocabulary („forest”, „hunting”, „hoarns”, „cops” etc.). The tenses and the modes of the tenses set in balance two temporal aspects: a past tense of the narration and, in the same time, an unhistorical temporal instance, a sort of a “historical” present.

From the point of view of the composition, the balad has a gradual rhythm, with the lyrical illustration of the three moments, taken to the “closed” ending, which relaxes the drama of the epical-lyrical situation. Within the composition of the balad, the elements of lyrism interlap with procedees belonging to thenarration and to the description.

Concerning the attitude of the lyrical-narrator self, it is impersonal, it is kept in a state of objectivity, up to the line that sets in scene an exclamation, with a participative-empathic value („Oh, my!”).

Who is this „prince from Levant” and what are his visions? The author himself states that the prince can be assimilated, as a symbolical value, to a „fantasy taken down at the very first confrontation with reality”: „A prince from Levant liking the hunt/ through the black heart of the forest would cross”.

The poem is structured as a dialogue between the prince and the servants with hoarns, a dialogue where short narrative passages mingle. Through the evaluation of the dialogue’s resources, the author sets in opposition the two attitudes in front of „the wild boar with silver fangs”, facing the absolute ideal. The prince asks the men to follow the wild boar with silver fangs from the story, and he tries to bring it back to reality („Barely making his way through the thicket,/ he played an ivory flute and said:/ -Join me to hunt in virgin forests/ the wild boar with silver fangs, angry,/ that changes in hidden hollows/ his hoof and fur and his glassy eye.../ Master, said the servants carrying hoarns,/ that wild boar does not come around here./ It’s better to deviate the hoarny venison,/ either the red foxes, or the small rabbits.../ But the prince passing smiling forward/ would look between the trees, careful at the colour,/ leaving the good deer in its bed/ and the lynx that laughs with gleatory eyes”).

The prince persists in his chase to the absolute causing a tension between himself and the servant who is becoming more and more daring. One of them talks about the positions of his absolute ideal, of the mirage whose fascination devours him, the other one is the example of common sense, of the pure empiric („Watch how he bursts out and scratches lonely,/ the wild boar with silver fangs, over the plains:/ come and let’s hit him with the iron arrow!.../ -Master, it is the grass rustling underneath the trees,/ said the servant smiling daring./ But he would answer turning around: - Shush.../ And the grass sparkled like a wild boar’s fang./ Under the fir trees, he would shout encouraging them to set to the crevices: / - Look where finds rest and a place/ the wild boar with the silver fangs, from the story:/ come and let’s hit him with the arrow of fire!.../ - Master, it is the moon shining through the trees,/ said the servant with disdain./ And he would answer turning around: Be quiet.../ And the moon would shine like a wild boar’s fang”).

The prince, attacked by the “huge” wild boar, dies at peace with himself, with his destiny forever marked by the fascinating force of the absolute ideal: „Oh my! Under the pale stars of the sky/ as he stayed in the twilight, bent towards the river, a huge wild boar came, and with its fangs/ savagely lured him through the reddish dust./ - What an odd beast fills me with blood,/ Stopping my wild boar’s hunt?/ What black bird sits at the moon and cries?/ What dry leave always carries me?.../ - Master, the wild boar with silver fangs,/ he is the one who caught you growling underneath the trees./ Listen to the hounddogs barking him away.../ But the prince replied turning around: - Be quiet./ You should better take the horn and keep honking./ Honk until I die, towards the clear sky.../ Then the moon set behind their heads/ and the horn honked, but just a little”.

The symbolical reading, as it is done by the author himself, is the one “that by refusing to see in its protagonists different traditional symbols – particular to certain cultures – generalises: the prince would be the man, in general; the wild boar – an image of the ideal; the hunting – an existential act of self-accomplishment. The balad therefore charges with a tragical-optimistic atmosphere (to the extent in which the denouement is seen as the touch of the ideal, as fulfilment of the meaning of life) or tragical-pessimistic (if the death of the prince is seen as a failure, or as a necessary sacrifice all along the biblical way). Such a reading would insist on the ethical implications: the prince’s virtues (courage, perseverance, “visionarism”, character nobility, spirituality, etc.) will be contrasted with the «naturalist» pragmatism of the servant, shedding light to the educative-formal role of the poem. Different historical-social considerations, even ideological, can find reasons within the text: under the moral status of the characters can be read a social status, dated historically. This way, the poem appears like a symbolical balad of the tragical (superior) existence”.

Obviously, Evident, Ștefan Aug. Doinaș’s balad allows us to find other significances and symbolical meanings. Therefore, it can also be considered a civilising ritual, the hunt can be seen as a ritual act with spiritual finality, just like an initiation ceremony where the prince, as a character of this spiritual action, must undergo a series of initial tests, in order to accomplish himself, he must resist any temptations that stand in his way, temptations that are represented by the servant’s lines.

Doinaș thinks that even “a reading that makes from the prince a symbol of the raw royalty, starting from an ambitious fight of premature instauration on the throne; or if we talk about the conflict between sacred and profane, a symbol of the long-lasting power, of the world, that is in full process of denoting the religious prerogatives”.

A final interpretation that can be done is the one of considering the balad *The wild boar with silver fangs* a poetical art, a pragmatismal creation, where the author tries to redefine his aesthetic position, to formulate, by using lyrical-dramatical and symbolical ways, his own conception concerning poetry and art. From such a perspective, the prince can only be the creator thirsty for the absolute ideal, the wild boar symbolises the mirage of the work, the ideal creation, unreachable. Another perspective of the reading is offered by the author himself, who states that, in this balad „the conflict turn out to be situated between the ideality of the (lyrical) work, shown through the “fictive”, imaginary character of the prince’s visions, situated in an airy space, on one side and the real as it is, in all its concrete and blunt form (the servant’s directions): the tragism of the lyrical creation would consist of the fact that the real, as it is, in its material «thickness», as Mallarmé would say, does not fit into the Work, or – if we really want to incorporate it – it kills it, by killing (from an artistical point of view) the author”.

From the point of view of the narration, we can notice the use of the caesurae after the fifth syllable, while the verse is cut in two uneven hemistiches. The rhyme is feminine and masculine, alternatively, which amplifies the passing from one lyrical echo to another, the quickening of the dialogues and the dynamics of the action.

A reflexive poet, for whom the lyrism is not a product of inspiration, of emotional turmoil, but rather a construction of the mind, a superior aesthetic artifact for whose elaboration contributes the intellectual capacity of the lyrical self to embrace in the line's harmonies all the sounds and meanings of the world, Ștefan Aug. Doinaș combines in his lines, an extreme freedom of the fantasy with the rigour and the precision of the images, with the bare and brief outline of the phrase or with the ermetic, allusive or symbolic language.

Ovidiu Cotruș, defining the intellectual-affective structure of Doinaș, rightfully notices: „With his infinite trust in the liberating powers of the art and with the interior freedom of the constructing artist towards his own emotional states (for an aesthetic nature a nightmare ceases to exist once it is stated), with its innate and cultivated taste for the geometrical strictness, Doinaș subdued his oems to numerous experimental tortures. Just like the mathematician willing to discover various and necessary ways to solve his problems, finally choosing the most elegant solution, Doinaș tried for almost each poem more possibilities to express himself, remaining to the most necessary one, the most appropriate for his aspiration towards therich expression, learned from Arghezi's literary apprenticeship”.

A poem that valorifies the theme of the literary creation and that of the creator is *Writing like the angels*. In this creation Doinaș's lucidity and visionarism tie together in a lyrical expression that cultivates the allusion and the conciseness, the allegorical vibration and the ideatic tension withheld.

The writing is conceived by the poet as ego and humility. Facing reality, with his overwhelming presence, is the act of writing necessary, isn't it a tautological, useless gesture? The poet, with his semi godlike allure, has a presentiment about his ego but also about the guilt of writing: „The one who says «Give birth, die, and the adventure/ of the world is written! » isn't he offended by/ the feather's small ego/ that I am holding in my fingers?”

The poet, fruit of the becoming process, of the passing of the time and the hazard of the moment, sees himself as a promise, as a halo of possibilities, as a virtuosity that closes within itself the future untold epiphanies of the human being, is meant to set “the second and the place”, to suspend the moment and to confiscate the infinite virtuosity of his own being, by writing it down. The writing, in such a vision, is diminishment of the possible infinite, it is degradation of the world's virtuosity, reduction of the existence to an image, a significance, an aspect („The river wants me running, - promise of the sea / flower – but not a fruit! – meant to be/ a summer notice in clay/ of the everlasting flowers.// But I confiscate even the second and the place,/ liturgies are burning and sipping from the rivers what they don't have/ to give permission to the beauty/ unlike the appearances”).

The writing as a guilt of the mimetics, but also as a symbolical rebellion against what has already been said about godliness, is assumed by Ștefan Aug. Doinaș also from the perspective of the antinomy between ideal and real, between essence and appearance, between virtuality and epiphany. Between the intention, between the ideal assumed as a suggestion of the infinite possibility and the concrete realisation of the oetical idea, in the reality of the writing there is a precipice, a revealing hiatus: „pure chaos, God's holly matter,/ is born under my hand; I copy by feeling/ - with elevated vowels – the intact/ spinning of the signs;/ as if an alter ego of the one

who, by himself/ judges, would have given me, as a punishment here,/ making up: jealous – he would have broken/ a seal of the Making.// What has left from my soul, for the big/ day of the wrath, undevoured? It is crunched/ like the barley for the horses, the hungry/ locust of the page. // I have coveted for much, but only a little would I get. / If they were to put my rejected ash on a scale, / I would be redeemed – even in the failure/ of writing like the angels... ”.

The act of the artistic creation, suplece and total expedite is, for Doinaş, a devouring need to legitimate the being, by assuming its own identity and of the communion with the world, with the divine, with the time and the written or unwritten history.

Another significant creation with a programmatic character is the poem *Elegy in major gamut*, written in 1944. The predominant tonality is solemnity, a churchlike solemnity, with deep voice variations, with the stern shivering of the word which feels unrevealed mysteries in the convulsive reality. The starting point of the poem is the second commandment of the Decalogue, in a lyrical transcription engraved on the background of the feeling of love, a feeling that has disturbing resonances, fundamental in the adolescent's consciousness.

Obviously, there is an unrevealed mixture of voluptuousness of the present and of mirage of the memory's imaginary world. The moment of erotic happiness, filtered through the memory's resorts, gets iridescences of the primal mystery, it is barely seen in the middle of the poet's plastic imagination, polished by the time's tides: "Don't make a face carved from mine/ And don't worship a high smoke. / My pagan bronze beauty remains/ an idol for the other sky. / May the long exchanged kisses/ bloom today somewhere else, / with other songs nearby, / with other meanings in your silence. / The pleasures like the painted boats/ whipped the water from their round head, / and the moment of the happy memory/ is only an ochre dusty seashell. / Don't make a carved face from the memory / and don't think about old fervors either. / comforting, a thick paint / applies to the thoughts other masks."

The experience of love, which the lyrical self arduously lives, is an indecisive one and also revealing for the human being's expressivity, for the transforming force of the communion between two consciences. The adolescent who says "I" in this poem has something from a young God who knows his immeasurable powers, but he is also an in loved young man, for whom the entire world is nothing more than a resonance box of his own states of mind. The privileged state of love is therefore, for the poet, unique, unrepeatable, difficult to return to the thought through the memory, which is difficult to reconstruct. It is a state that can barely be suggested, in the right words, in expressions with an undecided contour. The illusion of calmness, interior and exterior equilibrium is stunning in this poem, where the poet proves his propensity for the appolinal, classical forms, transcribing, in a "major" key the elegiac state of the one whom, looking in the past, tries in vain to catch the image of a feeling that keeps sliding further and further in the abyss. The tragical thrill that can be barely seen through these lines is shaped in calm, solemn forms, in rhythms of a perfect equilibrium.

The second part of the poem is an elegiac song on the theme of memory seen as trying to remake an essential communion, through which the past and the present face each other, in a sort of temporal palimpsest, like two mirrors that amplify each other's hidden abysses in their waves. The real, with all its nuances and its imaginary, with its secret halo, meet in this solemn, alchemic and etheric writing in the same time: "Free the boat from the shore and go./ Just like the meteors get lost in the sky, / in the gulf of the lost love extinguishes/ the holly bitterness tasted so many times. / leaving me forgotten, you shall kill me / with every roar, just like the furies. / A reed of liquid suffering/ to play in the delta foaming at the mouth. / But upstream,

next to the old rivers, under the stars, / just like you don't offer sacrifice to the foreign Gods, / don't sacrifice anything to my absence/ nor to its beauty shall you bow. / But catch me in the house, amongst things: / let the hunting bronze rotten. / While you, not hearing it, to be happy / that in the dawn of another world even the Gods die".

A poem made up of delicate sensations and subtle intuitions of the state of grace, *Elegy in major gamut*, traces in a delicate calligraphy the outline of the feeling of love, but in the same time, it remakes the dimensions of an elevated time, a sort of an eternal present, where the existence fades away, the affects discipline their seizures, and the lyrical atmosphere is almost ritualistic, of a solemn chanting, a song with an interior musicality, turned on itself.

The gravity, the confessional tone, the language's ceremonials, but also the rigour of the expression, these could be the essential features of Ștefan Aug. Doinaș's initial poems. Referring to the structuring way of the lyrical vision belonging to Doinaș, Ovidiu Cotruș notices that "the structuralising factor of Doinaș's poems has always been the poetic idea and never the ansamble of states of mind that form a poetical idea. This is only the original layer that enables the birth and feeds the developing of the poetical idea, without being through itself defining for the poems of Doinaș. Still, these poetical ideas are sometimes shown to us directly, and at other times through a poetical instance".

In the poem *Symposion* the emotional state is also represented lyrically through the mis-en-scene, which gives the creation its spectacular character and its semantic depth.

The first image is that of a "feast" of an immemorable age, a feast at which the guests feel "uninvited", only carried by sheer chance and the unforeseen. Obviously, the feast is nothing else than the existence itself, at which each of us is called, from beyond, without any predestination ("From the very beginning, the feast hadn't been/ meant for any of us. / Neither the wines in the cups had been new, / nor the pomegranates shining on the table. / Older than the world is the feast. / only lust and spoil are fresh / and the clay masks of the guests").

The destiny is shown here as a frenetic show, where the guests with their "clay" masks, their gestures are ancient, set in motion by a repetitive mechanic through which is suggested that the same show of life has already been played and will be played by other actors, more or less gifted: „We were brought here, as a set thing, / by a whisper among whispers, by a song / that started to sound louder and louder. / Don't you taste the bitter taste of wine? / Looking with hypnotic eyes through the glass, / we toast the neighbouring cups laughing, / but we don't know for what and for whom. / What a meaningless, reckless party!"

Taken in by the swirl, by the magic of life, the guests act, live guided by an instinct, a tyrannical force, which is above them. Actually, they do gestures that have already been done by their folks, they imitate attitudes that have already been shared, and they express the feelings of the people before them and of those who are to come: „Baby, break the mad charm! / This awful drunkenness isn't good. / Can't you see how the mighty gesture folds together / before turning it completely? / Look, the tables are shining, / making true the sitting at libation/ of their sunken generations / and the sliding of the barefooted people/ who feasted before you. Are you listening? / this sombre, shaken chanting, / is like a lost voice, from other times; / the kiss comes on its own, stuck; / this embrace has already been given; / and the smile of pleasure has a trinket / emballemed, just like the kings from Egypt: / a sign made by nobody to anyone".

Life, the entire existence is seen by poet as a hallucinatory show, where the actors have chimerical faces, and their gestures seem carnival like transponder of a dream with uncertain contours and with an incongruent syntax. The existence is therefore situated, for Doinaș, at the

boarder between reality and mirage, it bears the seal of the troubled dream, of the oniric marked by magic and mystery, but also by the force of illusion („Oh, it is all a dream, another world. / And we act, in young costumes, / a grizzled role as no other one exists... / this is what I would say if I had the word. / But oh, my! I will also have stepped down on the wind / that will blow over the guests. And I / shall difficultly move from my place, / giving it up, after the great ordering, / to the strangers that will enter the hall / in a hurry, cold, coming to drink as well / from the mystical nectar prepared by the Gods / and shared to everybody according to the justice”). Once the show of life has been consumed, once the magic of existence is torn apart, only “sediments” and left overs remain because the hoax of existence prepares to start again, with different actors, with other masks and other parts. Our part is, suggests the poet, only temporary, it is loaned, ephemeral and transitory. The poem *Symposion* is a lyrical allegory of the existence, where the plasticity of the parabola and the vigour of the spectacular element combine as harmoniously as possible with the suggestive expression and the musicality of the verse.

A parabolic poem with philosophical meanings is *The Sun and the Seashell*, a lyrical allegory of a failed communion between two entities belonging to antinomian, irreconcilable species. There are serious similarities between Doinaș’s ballad and Eminescu’s *Luceafărul* (*The Star*) or *Riga Crypto and lapona Enigel* belonging to Ion Barbu, both from the perspective of the allegorical significances and from the perspective of the vision and of the poetical attitudes set in place. The first sequence of the text introduces us in the special and temporary dimensions of the “story”. The time during which the allegory will develop is a mythical one, without signs or precise determinations, an auroral time of the beginnings.

The lyrical heroes are also presented: one of them is the Sun, representing the highest position of a transcendental world of the light, the other one is the Seashell, a part of the underworld and of the darkness, of the mysterious, unbreakable aquatic („In the young nameless days, / when the stars where not at all shy/ to let loose their orbits in the world / like golden birds with firry beaks, -/ a new Sun, flattened flyer / that cries to the clouds, chased away by the storms, / found a water stream like a breath of fresh air, / dressed in girdles of brown stars, / in which – ruling over the wide seas / and over green algaees with armpits, / brought by accident from other oceans/ by the sepia or by other bright fish -/ a royal, virtuous seashell, / in alabaster and mother-of-pearl enamel / for thousands of years he cultivated in his home / the shade, just like a cloth of loom”).

Two worlds and two existential attitudes collide in this poem, two ontical instances. To begin with, there is a first instance, symbolised by the Sun, which is defined through the rising tendency, through rationality, dynamism and elevation of thought and moment, and also on the other hand, a static instance, of inhibition and of withdrawal into the deep, in the dark and mellow universe of the protecting aquatic, instance represented by the seashell.

Obviously, the engagement between the two worlds is meant to fail, the return of the Sun to the aquatic only meets resistance and withdrawal from the seashell, scared by the sunrays: „As the Sun was in hurry, / a raw sunray, barely flickering, / got through the silk and the embroidery / holding for an instant the spear towards it. / But the seashell, dizzy and confused, / wanting to protect its smooth makeup / and the pearl from the flame that, **lehuză**,/ would give the shivers to the virgin womb, -/ run into the deep, jumping from step to step/ to the shore with leaves and sparkling, / with which the plain, wise water / spreads and gives birth to illusions. / When the Sun came towards the evening, tender, / With its wings burning above/ and dived just like a diver/ closed in a strange green suit, -/ the poor shell, in ideal tents, / noisy, all alone in the

ocean, / felt him all of a sudden with spirals/ like an in love, sneaky snake, / that keeps his cold eye in a distance/ and takes out his red tongue through his teeth/ daringly putting it closer/ to the shoulders of the hot currents”.

The two elements, one the symbol of warmth and of the world, the other one representing a delicate being of the shadow and of the aquatic are meant to be apart forever. They cannot exceed their condition, attracted by the mirage of the highest, of the absolute, the other one fixated into the abysses of the deep, in the light sleeping of the water. The universe that the poet configures this way is an immutable one, with laws and unbreakable determinations, where the elements and the entities cannot change places; they cannot abandon their specie and their condition.

The ending of the poem offers precisely the solitude sensation where the two elements are, attracted at one point by each other, but situated in an antinomial position („That’s why running away scared/ through dark constellations, it woke up/ on the other side, troubled, / where there is never daylight. / And the Sun, dreaming about a gulf of utopia, / for thousands of years not even today is he at peace, / but he suddenly falls down at the tropics, / blinded by beauty and sin, / spreading fire in the pointed tents / the pillars of the world, the algaees from above / that weep on the sky and restlessly ask/ to be kissed, after the sunset”).

Allegory of an impossible wedding, but in the same time a metaphor of the redeeming with its own condition, *The Sun and the Seashell* illustrates, without a doubt, the objective lyrism framed in an epical-dramatically structure belonging to Stefan Aug. Doinaş. The poetical images have certain suavity, a dream-like changing, and the expressivity of the lyrics comes also from the smooth musicality of the words, filled with pomp and euphonical freshness. The classicism, the need for harmony and transparency of the poetical knowledge equally represent fears and trademarks of Doinaş’s poetry. For the author of *The wild boar with silver fangs* the poem is, foremost, the fruit of a constructive calling, the result of a straight will to instaurate aesthetic coherence, harmony and clarity in the lyrical sublimate space.

The mystery of the world, the rumour of the seconds, the moment of happiness, the serenity facing destiny, all these places are shaped from the perspective of the artist of the word, for whom communication with the essences is the deziderate for any poetical act. Eugen Simion underlines several of the most striking particularities of Doinaş’s poetry: „Coherent, equal with itself, Augustin Doinaş’s poetry is less the result of an experience and more the result of an exercise or as not to cause a gap between the notions, his poetry is the result of an exercise. The exercise is foremost in the language domain, then to discipline the spirit and exceed the senses. The lyrism becomes objective, fatal and temnds to conceptualise the current notions of the existence. And still the conceptualisation is not, like in the case of Ion Barbu, the tightness of the poetical idea”.

The poem *Poetical Art* is a parabola of the fiction world, of the writing and the captivity of the creator in his own creation, a suggestive parabola for the unbreakable symbiosis between tradition and modernity in Doinaş’s creation. The writing includes, for the poet, in its unfaultable substance, the moment of grace and the suggestion of a founding myth, rising to unimaginable horizons and probing of the human soul. The poet is basically, as the author suggests, prisoner of its creating enthusiasm, captured in his own work just like in his own being. What turn out to be interesting are the allusions and the symbols of the flight and of the high from this poem, significant for Doinaş’s artistic conception, poet for whom creation means elevation, transfiguration and revelation of the essences: „With the resurrection of the white birds/ from

this oltenian carpet/ begins and ends a legend. / I am its prisoner. / Don't ask me more. Shining, / like any star, can be the presence / of the vowels, and what spins around/ them is fruit of desperation/ to establish contacts. White birds, / denying their own plotting, but not/ the flying... On this ground rules the shadow of the beheaded tyrant”.

The ending of the poem sens us the image of the creator set in the middle of the artistic process, of the artist who doesn't have a personal life, identifying himself right to the annihilation of himself with the work he is creating. The poet is the one who feeds on his own writing, and who, on his turn, only lives within the perimeter traced by the rhythm of his creating effort („Prisoner, I only breath / in the amplex of the coming and going of the shuttle”).

The poetical art is a lyrical miniature where the economy of the stylistical means, the contraction of the expression allies itself with the depth of the meanings, dream-like and ethereal, with an unexhaustable symbolical detent.

In Ștefan Aug. Doinaș's case, the poetical emotion is not an absolute pure one, it is not immediate, but more mediated by the intellect's retorts, so that passion with its ups and downs, hurries in classical towers of the expression, receives a harmonious shape, a solemn posture. The moment set in the ceremonial, the thrill of the kiss fixated in the ritualistic retorts of the memory, all of the above can be seen in the poem *A God of the Boundaries*, where the eros, the memory, the time and the melancholy of the passing are set in the background of the allegory.

As a prosodic form, the poem is a sonnet which sets the moment of love, relentlessly passed, into the affective regime of the memory. The poet sets, with his graceful pen, an allegory of love that is never complete, a communion between beings, always contradicted by their subtle, but immovable boundaries: „A God of boundaries is between us. / The kiss remains on his shoulders/ and he lies down, forgotten, rotting like the apple/ that we once both bit. // we remember it was bitter. / On the breasts of dew, then on the hips/ the flame would flicker in his hair, / just like ever since I have always seen him”.

The two parts of the sonnet seem to have an even bigger charge of melancholy, of nostalgia provoked by the consumption of the moment of love. The consciousness of the limits, of the existence of implacable boundaries is even clearer set here („Now you are far away, and the dream is ash. / A wave rich in smoke and disasters / passing by it washes away the place where we sat. // Now I understand that until we die / by the age of fire, of hearts, of stars / a God of the boundaries sets us apart”).

The God of boundaries is the very time, which by the tender and atrocious passing of the seconds, unwinds the magic of love, turning into ash the kisses and the whispers, the dreams and the memories.

What is worth mentioning is the fact that the tonality of the poem maintains itself in a regime of affective delicateness, of expressive transparency and of the serious melancholy. The tenderness of the feeling of love intermingles with the solemnity of the confessional ritual, with the tenuous ceremonial of the memory, the only one that can, in a way, fade the limits, the boundaries between the beloved people. Of course, the analysis offers a purified image of the feeling, an image of a genuine transparency, from where the emotional impurities, the inconsistencies of the sensations have disappeared.

The lines of the poem impose themselves through their clarity and freshness, but also through the musical magic that is set by associating the words and the syllables.

“A tragic person transformed, apollinical” (Mihail Petroveanu), the poet has enough passion about the fascination of the Idea and his drama is of not having access to its mysteries

only on a few rare occasions, in the privileged moments of the graceful state. Between the demonic of the world, with its unpredictable game of surfaces and lines and its interior restless and uncomfortable daimon, the one who returns it to an essential condition, in the steamy, envailing, fascinating and geometrical mirror, of the verse. A verse that resides as it has been seen at the gathering of tradition with modernity.

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EUGEN SIMION AND THE VOCATION OF TOTALITY

For Eugen Simion, literary criticism is a complex intellectual enterprise, constantly animated by the vision and vocation of totality. As a matter of fact, the reputed critic declares his options very specifically in an interview: *"I choose today, like yesterday, a complex type of criticism, a creative criticism, readable, with an epic background (so that it is comprehensible, even seductive to the reader), a literary criticism that has passed through the space of new methods and found its authority and spiritual spread. Then, I do not believe that a literary critic should remove himself from the critical discourse."*

G. Dimisianu views Eugen Simion's criticism as *"a criticism mobilized by the vision of totality. If he approaches a subject in a book, Simion also attempts to exhaust it. He advances on large fronts and acts by surrounding slowly the literary work from all of its parts. He delays over the details, has patience. He performs many incursions in the fields that are adjacent to the subject. He quotes plentifully, fits the explored literary work into its historic frame, placing it then in the context of the discussions it generated when it appeared and later on"*.

The principles upon which Eugen Simion's critical enterprise develops are to be found in the judgment of the literary work in its text as well as in its context, but also in the light of the truth; the objectivity and exigency, with himself and with the others, the respect for the opposite opinion, the undisguised admiration for a valuable literary work, the risk of harsh judgments – all of these proven with enough refinement and assumed with rigor and certainty, represent the marks of such an enterprise.

Also surprising is the mobility of the critic's view, a view that has a great availability to various experiences of writing. Such availability only results from the empathetic disposition we assume to be at the origin of his critical discourse. Distrustful with methods (although he has applied them for a while – the thematic criticism, for instance), Eugen Simion attempts, in his essays and studies, to decipher the unique, unrepeatable being of the text, by a sort of capitulation of the ultimate meanings, of those meanings that support, eventually, its specificity.

On the other hand, what Gheorghe Grigurcu calls *"the comfortable nature of the critic"* is not at all an acceptance of the definitive things – it starts from a systemizing and regulating fervor, from a will of a system that proves to be one of the gifts of the critical discourse. In spite of this somehow Apollinic feature, of this apparently Olympian face lacking any wry, Eugen Simion is nevertheless haunted by anxieties, by doubts that are contracted in a writing marked by balance and sobriety, by recollection and detachment from its "object". It is a fact that Gheorghe Grigurcu also notices: *"Although apparently lacking febrility to the point of becoming descriptive and achieving the tranquility of conformant judgment, Eugen Simion's criticism has its demons, disguised in the thick layers of the discourse. One must stir into them and remove a lot of mud in order to find them. But the satisfaction of seeing how these goblins of negation paradoxically carry wisdom, representing the most vivid expression of the critic's option, is there to be found. Eugen Simion becomes truly interesting when his sight sharpens in order to notice the error and the error is revealed without any sumptuous cautions"*.

Although distrustful with the constraining methodologies, with the latest critical acquisitions (because he is loyal to an available, mobile interpretation of the literary text's intimacy), Eugen Simion is no stranger to thematism, for instance, a critical method he has exercised in *Dimineata poetilor / The Morning of Poets*, one of his best books. In it, the critic tries to

recover some of the premodernist poets, proposing a new reading of some works that have been unfairly forgotten or improperly situated and studied.

This revisiting enterprise does not only generate a more adequate bond between the premodernist poets and the sensibility of nowadays poetry readers, but also an empathetic communion, a sometimes unsettling accordance between the critic's eye and the literary work he analyses. Some exquisite critical metaphors define and give hue to this poetic landscape, leading the analysis to *comprehension* and the commentary to the ecstasy of comprehensive interpretation, like in these paragraph about Bolintineanu: "*Bolintineanu does not leave the Romantic valley, he does not remain loyal to the solitary, proud, rock, his fantasy is not bound to the field or the hill, he has no appetite for a special category of the reality. His imagination wants to bring close a marvelous world, where the sky, the earth and the sea merge and participate to a virginal existence*" or "*The virginity of the object has, in Bolintineanu's poetry, a correspondent in a suspect softness. The intense, long sight corrupts the tenderness of things. The morning turns quickly in a sunset of lust... The feeling begins for Bolintineanu from the boundary of the pleasant, of the sweet, of the pure, of the delight, in other words: from a certain degree of corruption of the matutinal, of the virginal, of suavity*".

Such enunciations, where exigence is completed by an associative and imaginative spirit, and the dynamics of the discourse is perfectly molded on the interpreted text, only confirm Simion's appetite for the identification criticism that almost all his commentators have noticed. Sometimes, the critic even takes tonalities from the commented authors, employs expressions or affective accents in order to illustrate better some literary work, a style or a distinctive literary structure ("*Chin, foc, mânăciune mare, năcaz mare, durere otrăvită, lacrimi curgând pârau și încă o dată, de zece, de o sută de ori hrănit cu plâns, suspin, vaet... these are the terms that are repeated in Conachi's poetry. They define love as passion, more precisely: an unhappy passion. Unhappiness is, without any paradox, the condition of happiness and existence for the protagonist who is in love. All of Conachi's commentators speak of his power of inventing disasters, in other words of his power to fake, of his restless imposture*").

One of the critic's defining features is the temperamental and stylistic unity of his phrase. Equal with himself, never allowing any excessive interpretation, cultivating temper and moderation, as well as a certain consistency of the interpretation, Eugen Simion never looked for celebrity by momentous iconoclasm or by definitive acts of inclemency. His judgments, based on extreme clarity, lacking any demons of doubt, have a "white", neutral tonality, with no vehement language but, on the contrary, set in the patterns of gracious, expressive critical metaphors. In this dynamicity of equidistance and inner coherence, in this cultivation of moderation and delicacy of reception lies a problem of taste, of temper and expression. Some preferences may also be found, emerging from this temperamental-expressive structure of the critic. N. Manolescu has found some of them: "*The critic is the same in the pages dedicated to poetry and prose, theatre, even criticism. His tastes seam clear to me, though, in spite of his tempered and "democratic" way of commenting literature. For instance, I don't think I'm wrong to consider that Eugen Simion has built a certain image about poetry that – although he carefully uses in each case the adequate instrument as well as a tolerance shown to various poetic formulas – reveals some preferences and unadherences. The first refer to solemn poetry, mainly lyrical and confessing, a poetry tht may be followed in its hidden symbolic side or has a certain mythical substrate. Inventiveness, the ludic spirit, irony, the intrusion of the epic and of the theatrical in poetry, nevertheless, makes the critic distrustful. An unrevealed hierarchy of the poetic species (maybe not fully conscious) may be partially responsible of this fact.*"

Many of Eugen Simion's literary analyses reveal his esthetical, esthetical, existential and moral options, as well as the reading preferences of a critic who always knows how to find the

right expression to designate the originality of a poetic voice, to circumscribe an epic talent or to dissociate the relevant elements of tonality, of expression in the case of a writer. It is also beyond any doubt that in Eugen Simion's critical pages the lucidity of the analysis is convergent with an empathetic impulse, his effort of comprehension being based on sympathy, on a discretely camouflaged emotive exultance. A paragraph on Maria Banus is particularly relevant here, as the clarity of the expression, the plasticity of the phrase and the affective color create a subjective understanding of a type of literature and of its writers from a perspective focused on essentiality and on the overcoming of the contingency: *"Agonic clairvoyance? Here is a disturbing interrogation and a possible definition of poetry that rediscovers its adequate tonality and tools. Maria Banus's poetry becomes truly agonical in a more profound existential way: it starts speaking about boundaries and crossings, about the feathery bearing of melancholy and, more persistently and poetically convincing, about death"*.

Perceiving literature and, in general, authentic culture as a "defiance of rhetoric", Eugen Simion brings to Romanian literary criticism the judicious tone, the lack of temperamental excesses or expressive loudness, seeking for the point of balance and also trying to capture the intimate dynamicity of the text, the inner substance of the literary work in its ultimate truth: *"What makes Eugen Simion's writing be so intellectually pleasant and stimulating?"* – wonders Marian Papahagi in *Fragments despre critica / Fragments on criticism*. And it is also he who answers: *"Seen in their autonomy, the sentences are simple, short, without any ornaments, the tonality is without anything dry or academic, with vague inflexions of familiar language and generally austere, tempered; any temperamental excess is absent. All the pages create a sensation of fortifying balance. This is, obviously, the model represented by Lovinescu."*

The figure of the critical spirit truly has something of the Lovinescian effigy and his attraction to the classic expression, but also of the preference for thin irony, in which the challenge of lucidity is completely camouflaged in the greatly clear expression. In fact, the pages dedicated to Lovinescu show us two structures in affinity, both temperamentally and scripturally: *"The tranquility of Lovinescu's spirit comes from deep within his restless consciousness. It is the fruit of a great spiritual effort. The equal humor is, in his relation with people, a form of civilization. His challenge is deeper and full of greater consequences than the challenges of the unstable, always disturbed spirits"*.

Delivered, at the same time to a constitutive lucidity and to certain anguishes masked under a perspicuous and permanently managed critical phrase, Eugen Simion builds his assertions scrupulously, experiencing with a displaced passion and great avidity literature – this fictional space where, as the critic writes: *"everything transforms (beauty is the sensible idea in movement, something is lost, the essential is kept and reinvents itself)"*.

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NICHITA STĂNESCU – KNOWLEDGE AND POETIC MYTH IN *11 ELEGIES*

The poetic space which Nichita Stănescu delimits, in an equally lucid and pregnant assumption, can be labeled as a concomitant space of rupture and continuity. Thus, on the one hand, the poet programmatically dismisses didactic and epic poetry which “canonizes” reality and reduces it to its apparent manifestations and aspects, and, on the other hand, with natural alterations, he draws on the experience of interwar poetry which he integrates in his own poetic system as acceptance and assumption of the very essence of poeticity. This fertile duality of the *refusal* and *acceptance* is visible at the level of the poetic language which, far from relying on implied literality, slogan-like discursiveness or on the element of the “dissolution of the self in the generic of the *class*”, as Cristian Moraru stated, is integrated in a profoundly personalized (and personalizing) lyrical impulse, in which the subjective rhetoric gains the shape of a rediscovery of the self and the “transitivity” of the proletcultist poetic communication is rejected to the benefice of reflexivity and literarity, of connotative, substantially metaphorical writing.

In this regard, Nichita Stănescu’s former books (*Sensul iubirii* and *O viziune a sentimentelor*) make use of lyrics marked by accents of sensoriality and thus translate a true mythology of identity. The lyrical universe configured by these volumes in an auroral one, marked by a jubilation of living and of poetic discourse. As a matter of fact, it may be stated that this world of beginnings, in which conscience becomes acquainted, with participative exultance, of the miracle of being, the coincidence between living and telling is almost perfect. It is as if the shape of things found an instantaneous and complete reflection in the mirror of the poetic thought, as the poet’s words gained the substantiality, materiality and savor of things in the sense used by Nicolae Manolescu to talk about Nichita Stănescu’s lyrics as of “poetry which makes itself an object, in a continuous matter exchange with the world, which is literally being built in front of our eyes, while, assuming the real, it transmits its own verbal existence”.

Therefore, the poems belonging to this early period institute a lyricism of the celebration of cosmos unity, in which the contemplating I is harmoniously integrated, without ontological spasms, freed from any skeptically reflexive accents, in an empathic communion which is not mediated with the elements whose manifestations become more and more analogue and complementary forms of the poet’s vitalist soul. This Dionysian abundance of sensations is most accurately revealed in a poem such as *Dimineață marină*, in which the evocation is textually directed by juxtaposing some plastic images, of extreme concreteness, images whose chromatic dynamism is captured in the imperceptible tone; this poetics of the precisely reconstituted tone marks even more clearly the subjectivism of the lyrical state, the austere emotion which the impact between the conscience and things provokes, in an almost generic landscape, in its archetypal essentiality. The feeling of conscience *awakening* is, in fact, the revelation of knowledge which can be explained as a co-birth, a procreation which joins together, in an indestructible whole, the subject and the object, the I and the world: “: “O dungă roșie-n zări se iscase/ și plopii, trezindu-se brusc, dinadins/ cu umbrele lor melodioase/ umerii încă dormind, mi i-au atins./ Mă ridicam din somn ca din mare, scuturându-mi șuvițele căzute pe frunte, visele,/ sprâncenele cristalizate de sare,/ abisele” (*Dimineață marină*).

The ascending movement of the sun and the self together is drawn by the poet by a synesthetic reverberation in which senses are combined in a jubilation of the perception, which equals the knowledge of the exteriority to the knowledge of the self. Another significant poem for this theme of the union between the I and the world, of the identity between the subject and the object is *O călărire în zori*, which is not accidentally dedicated to tge “young Eminescu”; beyond the otherwise easily perceptible romanticism of the vision and living, the poem marks the transcendence of the slightly claustrophobic cognitive circle instated by sensations and the attempt to transcend the being’s limited horizon towards that recuperatory meta-reality designed by the poetic word. This time, the lyrical impulse is directed towards the transcendence of the silence and the assumption, in a frenetic tonality, of the *expression*, seen as privileged means of the conscience to dialogue with the universe, in a permanent effort to accede to the light of knowledge, fact which was observed, among others, by Ștefania Mincu. In this way, the metaphor of the light, which is fundamental for Nichita Stănescu’s poetry, may be equaled to the hypostasis of the poetic verb, because, just as light is simultaneously wave and corpuscle, thus having a dual reality, in which antinomies conciliate and the poetic word is simultaneously object and subject, it represents transitivity and reflexivity, incorporating the Sign, the Meaning and the Referent in its ineffable structure as an organic whole. Birth of conscience and eulogy of knowledge, invocation of the essentiality of the word but also evocation of sacrality of the world, the poem *O călărire în zori* has all the mitopoetic data of an archetypal space, in which the harmony between the I and the world is beyond dispute and the imagistic exultance is nothing but the expression of vital frenzy which troubles the shapes of things and beings, rendering them subjective, impregnating the affective energy of the poetic I on them; this fact somehow explains that “sensorial perception of the world, visually exaggerated, shining and aerial” which Petru Poantă mentions.

The ascension to the light presupposed by knowledge, the birth of conscience as sum and assumption of the limits and possibilities granted to the human being to transgress them appear in clear lines, in which the pregnancy of the well-delimited images is combined with the dynamism of the transparent and equally dense vision: “Soarele rupe orizontul în două./ Tăria își năruie nesfârșitele-i carcere,/ Sulițe-albastre, fără întoarcere,/ privirile mi le-azvârl, pe-amândouă,/ să-l întâmpine fericite și grave./ Calul meu saltă pe două potcoave./ Ave maree-a luminilor, ave!”

The feeling of vital plenitude, of the *look* at the objects and of the harmonious integration of the lyrical I in a space with positive connotations is especially generated by the activation of the erotic sentiment, with the purpose of preserving the identity of the I with the self and of maintaining communication with the *other*. The Eros thus re-dimensions the elements of the universe and, through a centripetal movement, places them around the lyrical subject which on the one hand perceives the universe as a coherent, harmonious whole and, on the other hand, distinguishes the world under the spectrum of a paradigmatic approach to things: “Măinile mele sunt îndrăgostite,/ și, iată, m-am trezit/ că lucrurile sunt atât de aproape de mine,/ încât abia pot merge printre ele/ fără să mă rănesc(...)” (*Vârsta de aur a dragostei*). This ethics and poetics of the I’s participation to the essentiality of the world through the erotically subjective perception of the things, through the fascination of the creating Eros, but also through the sensorial jubilation of the subject facing its first contact with the world ultimately leads to the theme of the word, which is an extremely fertile theme in Nichita Stănescu’s poetry.

If in Nichita Stănescu’s former volumes the *word* as instrument of poetic communication, but also as an expression of the communication with the world was perceived from the

perspective of its identity and identification with the things and with the knowing I, as a consequence of the non-mediated assumption of the vitalist, sensorial impulse, starting with the volume *11 Elegies* the poet uses his lyrics for a deeper and deeper mirroring of the word's aporias, of its states of crisis, in a meditation on the fundamental difference and rupture between the internal and external dimensions of the logos. Thus, the *Elegies* expose, in the order of a mythologization of the poetic word, the tragic feeling of censorship between the I and the world, which is a sentiment announced by the painful revelation of dissolving time in the the volume *Dreptul la timp* and by the discovery of alterity, of gnoseological and ontological distance between the subject and the object. As a matter of fact, the antinomy I / universe is also instated by the inevitable alienation of the human being, who perceives the word as a cognitive simulacrum, as Stefania Mincu observes: "The word is an absence which precariously compensates alterity, the distance between the I and its other, a distance which is essentially caused by time. The definition of time becomes harder and harder to conceive; one discovers its unicity perceived as closeness, as impossibility of revelation to the outside, as it is margined by the abyss of time, which is different from the time of the conscience".

Defining, within the conceptual and manierist framework of the the *Elegies*, the tragedy of the I caused by the being's alteration under the impulse of time, but also the dramatically perceived distance between interiority and exteriority, the poet defines the word as a monolithical, eleatic, self-sufficient reality which does not inscribe itself within the flow of History, being the expression of perfect introversion, similar to the Hegelian Idea. The suggestion of the word's ideality is not entirely absent in the *Elegies*, but they transpose the arbitrary and tragic character of the words, which name and betray things, define and de-signify them, impregnating world objectiveness with a human touch and thus falsifying it. As a matter of fact, in *Cartea de recitare* the poet himself observes that "poetry, in its essence, is not about words. The essence of poetry is not to be sought after in language... Language for poetry is nothing else but a vehicle. But it, poetry, makes itself felt through the language, because, of all the body parts, it is speaking which least resembles its roots, its body, just as the leaf least resembles the root of the tree". On the other hand, if in the first elegy the theme of identity is transposed in terms of its introversion, in an eleatic vision and perception, which sees the Being as self-sufficient and the object as not yet dislocated from objectivity ("El este înlăuntrul desăvârșit,/ interiorul punctului, mai înghesuit/ în sine decât însuși punctul"), *The Second Elegy, Getica* insinuates more and more persistently the idea of alterity, of the distance between the subject and the object and, implicitly, the alienation of the being.

Nicolae Manolescu notes that the semantic nucleus of the elegies is "the same doubt regarding the power of the senses, the crisis of the real-thirsty spirit, a balance between the self which cannot escape itself and the world which only exists in this dramatic contemplative act". This is precisely why the insertion of alterity, the absence and the void place Nichita Stănescu's creation following the volume *Dreptul la timp* under the sign of an ontological tragism and a gnoseological skepticism, to the extent that the existential crisis undergone by the poet is reflected, with relative accuracy, into a crisis of the poetic communication which is caused, as Marian Papahagi observes, by the "search for the idea to the ultimate signification of this search, the idea of the word". The schism produced inside the language is only significant for the loss of the unity of the self, under the disintegrating impulse of time, oh historicism, of the confrontation between identity and alterity, in a game inscribed in the register of existential gravity, of the *sign* in search of the *meaning* which defines a certain poetic vision.

Nichita Stănescu's lyrics delimits in its most defining lines a space of complementarity, in which identity and alterity, the image of the self and the hypostases of the other are the terms of an existential and gnoseological equation, whose solution might be given by the poetics of the *non-words*, by means of which the antinomy object / subject can find relative conciliation, a beneficial integration in the referentiality of the world perceived as a harmonious and coherent whole and, not least, as a rediscovery and reconstruction of the self.

The volume *11 Elegies* is therefore the proof of a mutation of sensitivity and the poetic document of a schism of the lyric I, who lucidly assumes a distance between the body and soul, between spirit and affectivity, in a recoil movement into the interiority of its own being and a fundamental knowledge of the world endowed with gnoseological authenticity. Cristian Moraru observes that with this volume "we remain in the empire of identity and of the full, of the integrating impulse, but the poetic I experiences a first schism, that between the body and the soul. Between the irrationality of viscosity and the sensibility of a spirit which, though functioning by *Seele's* logic, still emits claims to the idea of *creating*. Of building, of opposing a new 'reason', a new 'common sense' of poetic essence to a routine, trivial, Euclidian state of fact, to a narrow 'copernicianism'".

The First Elegy provides a lyrical transcript of a meditation on the phenomenology of conscience. The self conscience configures an itinerary of knowledge with the dominance of a dual type of movement, of expansion and retraction into itself, of exteriorization and interiorization. In a first moment of its evolution, the spirit is characterized by absolute purity, it is self-sufficient, has no margins and no transcending finality. It is equal to itself, autotelic, reduced to its self-imposed limits, reluctant to any attempt of alienation: "El începe cu sine și sfârșește/ cu sine./ Nu-l vestește nici o aură, nu-l/ urmează nici o coadă de cometă.// Din el nu străbate-n afară/ nimic; de aceea nu are chip/ și nici formă. Ar semăna întrucâtva/ cu sfera,/ care are cel mai mult trup/ învelit cu cea mai strâmtă piele/ cu puțință. Dar el nu are nici măcar/ atâta piele cât sfera.// El este înlăuntrul – desăvârșit,/ și,/ deși fără margini, e profund/ limitat.// Dar de văzut nu se vede.// Nu-l urmează istoria/ propriilor lui mișcări, așa/ cum semnul potcoavei urmează/ cu credință/ caii...".

In such a hypostasis, the spirit is not only outside the laws of the common space, of absolute immateriality, but it also transcends the limits of time. In this assertion, it is in a perfect state of atemporality. For it, time is suspended, its dynamics is frozen and its stature is elevated. Furthermore, the spirit in this state of perfect virtuality, of absolute interiorization does not communicate in any way with the exterior, with the manifestations of the other elements of the universe.

It is similar to a leibnizian monad, self-sufficient, carrier of full meaning, with no 'windows' open to the surrounding world. it does not mirror anything to the outside, on the contrary, it only reflects itself, it projects its substance-lacking, immaterial, aerial face onto its own abysses: „Nu are nici măcar prezent,/ deși e greu de închipuit/ cum anume nu-l are.// El este înlăuntrul desăvârșit,/ interiorul punctului, mai înghesuit/ în sine decât însuși punctul.// El nu se lovește de nimeni/ și de nimic, pentru că/ n-are nimic dăruit în afară/ prin care s-ar putea lovi”.

The poet perceives existence under the sign of the paradox and of some irreconcilable antinomies; the one and the multiple, the spiritual and the corporeal, the dynamic and the static are duplicitous and, at the same time, complementary to the existence which does not cease to exert its fascination on the poet, to make him experience the perpetual stupor of being. That is why the relation of the I with the universe can only be paradoxical, of fundamental ambiguity.

Affirmation and negation are equally consubstantial to the state of being, just like essence and phenomenality are found together, combined on the balance of conscience („Aici dorm eu, înconjurat de el.// Totul este inversul totului./ Dar nu i se opune, și/ cu atât mai puțin îl neagă.// Spune Nu doar acela/ care-l știe pe Da./ Însă el, care știe totul,/ la Nu și la Da are foile rupte.// Și nu dorm numai eu aici,/ ci și întregul șir de bărbați/ al căror nume-l port.// Șirul de bărbați îmi populează/ un umăr. Șirul de femei/ alt umăr.// Și nici n-au loc. Ei sunt/ penele care nu se văd./ Bat din aripi și dorm -/ aici,/ înlăuntrul desăvârșit,/ care începe cu sine/ și se sfârșește cu sine,/ nevestit de nici o aură,/ neurmat de nici o coadă/ de cometă”).

As Mircea Martin observes, the poet's fundamental obsession seems to be “that of an exemplary, organic and cosmic unity”. The poet believes in finding an archetypal form, a primordial model beyond the multiplicity of things and beings, a form which should confer the universe its coherence, harmony and unity. In *The First Elegy*, Nichita Stănescu imagines in a lyrical form the Hegelian itinerary of the idea, in its state of non-manifestation, of self-sufficiency, of pure virtuality.

The lines of the poem have a gnomic shape, they are clear and precise, with an esoteric sound and an almost hermetic imagistic cipher.

The fifth elegy, entitled *The Temptation of the Real* instates a state of crisis, of the subject facing the multiplicity of the universe in front of the alterity of the world. The lyrical I witnesses a ‘trial’ initiated by the cosmos elements, precisely in the name of their irreducible alterity, in the name of the knowing subject's inability of deciphering the world in another way than in rational, human language which is therefore fundamentally falsifying and alienating (“N-am fost niciodată supărat pe mere/ că sunt mere, pe frunze că sunt frunze,/ pe umbră că e umbră, pe păsări că sunt păsări/ Dar merele, frunzele, umbrele, păsările/ s-au supărat deodată pe mine./ Iată-mă dus la tribunalul umbrelor, merelor, păsărilor,/ tribunale rotunde, tribunale aeriene/ tribunale subțiri, răcoroase”).

The “ignorance” with which the lyrical I is charged is born out of the absence of a plenary agreement with the intimate being of the universe. The I solely perceives appearances, the surfaces of things, which is superficial, without having access to primordially, to the ultimate essence, to the vital impulse which confers significance to the world: “Iată-mă condamnat pentru neștiință,/ pentru plictiseală, pentru neliniște,/ Pentru nemișcare./ Sentințe scrise în limba sâmburilor./ Acte de acuzare parafate/ cu măruntaie de pasăre,/ răcoroase penitențe gri, hotărâte mie”.

The stupor experienced by the I is the result of the confrontation between the individual conscience and the multiplicity of the universe. The proteic faces of the real refuse to let themselves deciphered in their inner being and only display their appearance, their exteriority, thus reducing to nil the possibility of the subject to assimilate the ultimate secret of things and living creatures: “stau în picioare cu capul descoperit,/ încerc să descifrez ceea ce mi se cuvine/ pentru ignoranță.../ și nu pot, nu pot să descifrez/ nimic,/ și-această stare de spirit, ea însăși/ se supără pe mine/ și mă condamnă, indescifrabil,/ la o perpetuă așteptare,/ la o încordare a înțelesurilor în ele însele/ până iau forma merelor, frunzelor,/ umbrelor,/ păsărilor”.

In this way, the adequate understanding of the world, in its authentic meaning, as well as the transposition of this meaning into words have a utopian character. The rupture between the I and the world dominated by multiplicity is perceived as guilt, and so is the dichotomous relation between the word and objects, or between the conscience and the words which it is given in order to express reality.

To decipher, to understand, to figure, to represent – these are exponential verbs in Nichita Stănescu's lyrical vision in *The Fifth Elegy*, these are key-words which try to transpose the tense relationship between the inquisitive conscience and the universe which does not let itself be perceived in its irreducible intimate structure.

The temptation of the real is, in fact, a refusal of the superficial, incomplete understanding of the world, a temptation of the limits of knowledge and a challenge that elements pose to the conscience. The guilt of the lyrical I is a beatifying one, to the extent to which the meaning emerging from objects and beings is prolonged by the poet's inquisitive conscience and modeled according to the fragile shape of the word.

Eugen Simion is right in his observation that "the theme of the *Elegies* is suffering from division, yearning for unity at a cosmic level [...]. The obsession of the rupture immediately triggers the idea of guilt, in this fecund and twisted dialectics. The reconstruction of primordial unity is not possible until the poet knows the language of kernels, the language of grass".

The poetic ideal in *The Fifth Elegy* is therefore circumscribed by the desire of harmonizing conscience and things, of communion between the one and the multiple, of reconstructing the balance and the primordial unity between the I and the world.

Stylistically, the poem stands out by the same abstract vision, characteristic for Nichita Stănescu's lyrics, in which the fervor of the idea is modeled in terms of the extreme vitality of the poetic language. This is also observed, among others, by Alex. Ștefănescu: "Nichita Stănescu is, more than other poets of ours, a lover of abstractions. A simple statistic operation proves that frequency of the abstractions in his poems is similar to the frequency of diminutives in Vasile Alecsandri's poems. Figures and letters, long infinitives, geometrical shapes, notions from various sciences currently enter, as transparent webs, the texture of his poems. To this are added many other common words, devoid of any concreteness – bird, leaf, horse, goat, cloud, flower – as if they had been kept in alcohol before being used".

Giving a plastic shape to the eternal confrontation between the subject and the object, the conscience and the world and its pluralistic manifestations and forms, Nichita Stănescu voices a poetics which is illustrative of a crisis of human knowledge, of a poetics of the encoded meaning and of a random dynamics of words. The intellectualized language, the gnomic turn of the lyrical discourse, the abstract phrase are to be found in *The Tenth Elegy* as well, with an edifying subtitle (*I am*), subtitle which shades light to the miracle of individual existence \m that corporeal and affective unit which induces the idea of identity between the I and the self.

The assumption of his own being as well as the annexation of the external world, in its essential data, are perceived by the author as a malady, a malady of the being who becomes alienated from its self as it perceives the outside world. Knowledge means guilty distancing from its own self, it means alienation by rapport to something else, a reduction of the self to something which is not part of its essence: „Sunt bolnav. Mă doare o rană/ călcată-n copite de cai fugind./ Invizibilul organ,/ cel fără nume fiind/ neazul, nevăzul/ nemirosul, negustul, nepipăitul/ cel dintre ochi și timpan,/ cel dintre deget și limbă, -/ cu seara mi-a dispărut simultan./ Vine vederea, mai întâi, apoi pauză,/ nu există ochi pentru ce vine;/ vine mirosul, apoi liniște,/ nu există nări pentru ce vine;/ apoi gustul, vibrația umedă,/ apoi iarăși lipsă,/ apoi timpanele, pentru leneșele/ mișcări de eclipsă;/ apoi pipăitul, mângâiatul, alunecare/ pe o undulă întinsă,/ iarnă-nghețată-a mișcărilor/ mereu cu suprafața ninsă”.

The disease that the poetic I claims to have is a gnoseologic one, it has to do with the register of knowledge, of the perception of the world. The poet suggests that senses are nothing

else but imperfect instruments of assimilating shapes, forms and colors of the real, but the way the representations of things are formed in the conscience of the poetic self differs fundamentally from the perceptive and sensorial images offered by the senses.

The poet is sick because of the need of total and subtle knowledge, which should reflect with a maximum of authenticity the reflexes of the universe, its unstable, perpetually fluctuant rhythms („Dar eu sunt bolnav. Sunt bolnav/ de ceva între auz și vedere,/ de un fel de ochi, un fel de ureche/ neinventată de ere./ Trupul ramură fără frunze,/ trupul cerbos/ rărindu-se-n spațiul liber/ după legile numai de os,/ neapărate mi-a lăsat/ suave organele sferii/ între văz și auz, între gust și miros/ întinzând ziduri ale tăcerii./ Sunt bolnav de zid, de zid dărâmat/ de ochi-timpan, de papilă-mirositoare./ M-au călcat aerian/ abstractele animale,/ fugind speriate de abstracți vânători/ speriați de o foame asbtractă,/ burțile lor țipând i-au stârnit/ dintr-o foame abstractă./ Și au trecut peste organul ne-nveșmântat/ în carne și nervi, în timpan și retină/ și la voia vidului cosmic lăsat/ și la voia divină”).

The inability of plenary expression of the rhythms of the universe triggers the morbidity of this gnoseological dissatisfaction, of this renewed nostalgia of the absolute, forever claimed but never to be satisfied („Organ pieziș, organ întins,/ organ ascuns în idei, ca razele umile/ în sferă, ca osul numit/ calcaneu în călcâiul al lui Achile/ lovit de-o săgeată mortală; organ/ fluturat în afară/ de trupul strict marmorean/ și obișnuit doar să moară./ Iată-mă, îmbolnăvit de-o rană/ închipuită între Steaua Polară/ Și steaua Canopus și steaua Arcturus/ și Casiopeea din cerul de seară./ Mor de-o rană ce n-a încăput/ în trupul meu apt pentru răni/ cheltuite-n cuvinte, dând vamă de raze/ la vămi”).

The state of being is thus equaled to suffering, to disease, to purifying nostalgia, to yearning for the world of ideal essences. The lyrical I becomes so much identified with the universe, in its most diverse manifestations, that suffering and the malfunctioning of things and beings are perceived as its own suffering, as manifestations of a desire for empathy, for consonance with the rhythms of nature. The identification of the lyrical subject in the surrounding cosmos is an expression of the desire for communion, for essential identity which binds together the human being and the elements of the world. The reflection of the human face in the mirrors of nature is founded precisely on this type of secret correspondence, on this type of harmonious balance.

The poetic I suffers from “the entire universe”, as the echoes of the universe are perceived by his conscience so sensitive to what is surrounding it: „Iată-mă, stau întins peste pietre și gem,/ organele-s sfărâmate, maestrul,/ ah, e nebun, căci el suferă/ de-ntreg universul./ Mă doare că mărul e măr,/ sunt bolnav de sâmburi și de pietre,/ de patru roți, de ploaia mărunță/ de meteoriți, de corturi, de pete./ Organul numit iarbă mi-a fost păscut de cai,/ organul numit taur mi-a fost înjunghiat/ de fulgerul toreador și zигurat/ pe care tu arenă-l ai/ Organul Nor mi s-a topit/ în ploi torențiale, repezi,/ și de organul Iarnă, întregindu-te,/ mereu te lepezi./ Mă doare diavolul și verbul,/ mă doare cuprul, aliorul,/ mă doare câinele, și iepurele, cerbul,/ copacul, scândura, decorul./ Centrul atomului mă doare,/ și coasta cea care mă ține/ îndepărtat prin limita trupească/ de trupurile celelalte și divine./ Sunt bolnav. Mă doare o rană/ pe care mi-o port pe tavă/ ca pe sfârșitul Sfântului Ioan/ într-un dans de aprigă slavă”.

For Nichita Stănescu the external world has its reason of being only to the extent to which it is mirrored into the conscience of the lyrical I, to the extent to which it is prolonged in the poet's self with its deepest and most legitimate resonance and significances. In this respect, this is what Ion Pop observes: “One may say that the world of objects exists for the poet to the extent to which it is capable of challenging, of emitting vibrations or reflexes, or of prolonging their

transfiguring dynamic effect. The aspect of his imaginary is dominated by figures of *transparency* and *reflection*, by matter which denies its opacity, letting itself pierced by luminous waves”.

The end of the poem configures the structure of a scenario of knowledge in which empathic nostalgia is conjugated with an ambivalent impulse of relation to the one, to the eleatic unity of the world and, at the same time, of propulsion towards multiplicity: „Nu sufăr ceea ce nu se vede,/ ceea ce nu se aude, nu se gustă,/ ceea ce nu se miroase, ceea ce nu încape/ în încreierarea îngustă,/ scheletică a insului meu,/ pus la vederile lumii cei simple/ nerăbdând alte morți decât morțile/ inventate de ea, să se-ntâmpale./ Sunt bolnav nu de cântece,/ ci de ferestrele sparte,/ de numărul unu sunt bolnav,/ că nu se mai poate împarte/ la două țâțe, la două sprâncene,/ la două urechi, la două călcâie/ la două picioare în alergare/ neputând să rămâie./ Că nu se poate împarte la doi ochi,/ la doi rătăcitori, la doi struguri,/ la doi lei răgind, și la doi/ martiri odihnindu-se pe ruguri”.

11 *Elegies* is an expression of the fundamental attitude of Nichita Stănescu's lyrical I of aspiration to the essence, of assumption of the world by identification with its rhythms, in a consonant reaction with the elements of nature.

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MARIN SORESCU – THE IRONIC SPECTACULAR

Author of a poetry that was mostly placed under the sign of non-conformism, of obvious lack of adhesion to the poetical convention and of the insurgency towards the traditionally recognized models, Marin Sorescu has configured for himself an unmistakeable lyrical personality, fundamentally irreducible to one of the many registers of his voice, to one of the numerous manifestations of a protean lyrical ego, hard to catch in some critical formula. Poet of de-mithicizing, of taboos and clichés' deconstruction, Marin Sorescu is nonetheless a poet of construction, articulating with an artisan's scrupulosity a viable artistic universe, of an indisputable inner coherence. A coherence primarily explained by this poetry's unity of artistic technique, but also by a naturally modulated poetical model, which is reiterated in every poetical 'sample' configured by the imagination of the author. In Sorescu's creations, a personal style, as an imprint of a powerful lyrical personality can extremely easily be perceived. If Malraux somewhere noted that style is 'the reduction of the world to a specific meaning', it is not less true that Sorescu's style is nothing but polarization, assemblage of poetical objects depending on an ironical (pre)disposition, reduction of the world's meanings to certain ironical-fantastical constants, in other words modification of the terms of realness by bantering and deriding, methods that render as relative the meanings, drop the temperature of the poetical discourse's gravity and affectively disengage their creator who always has not so much the conscience of a limit in his creation, but the certainty of an uninterrupted distance between the written text and the creator, of an unbreakable alienation established between letter and spirit. Therefore, it can be said, with good reason, that the tonality of Sorescu's lyrical 'emission' is not a retained one, celebrating the human being or the world, in which the poet repudiates his orphic, ceremonial attitude, but one of Balkan opulence of speech, for the lyrical discourse does not seem to be successively projected on the canvas of the poem, but rather instantly articulated, throughout a sole and certain stroke of a pen. Lust of poetical writing and speech, the centrifugal imagistic verve essentially translates the spectacle of an entropic reality, mined by a land disorder that endangers the very identity of the human being, by inserting it into a repetitive, tautological evolution of things: 'Teri am fotografiat numai pietre,/ Și piatra de la sfârșit/ semăna cu mine./ Alaltăieri – scaune -/ Și cel care-a rămas/ Semăna cu mine.// Toate lucrurile seamănă îngrozitor cu mine...' (*Developare*). It is visible here, as well as in other poems, the poet's intention to transcribe the contradictory manifestations of realness in the highest of fidelities. Hence, the rejection of any restraining or inhibitory prosodic intention, the formal liberty of his poetry, that allows it to record the spectacle of the existence without the contribution of a preconceived intention, in the absence of any 'apriorism'.

The poet who made his debut in 1964 with the parody volume 'Alone amidst poets' (a timid and vainglorious title, of a reserved irony) brought to light a sharp conscience of artistic convention, a skillfully staging sense of the era's poetry's clichés and tics. The book has, as noticed, a polemical substratum, as we can consider the poems that constitute it as a kind of meta-poems, poems about poems, creations that are set afoot by an obvious intention to criticize the lyrical reportages of the former era, the rhetoric that lacks substance, but also some modernist extravagances. Marin Sorescu – the one from 'Alone amidst poets' - rapidly takes the patterns

and abandons them, in a sort of parody jubilation, in a mimetic voluptuousness and a voluble formal histrionic through which the lyrical ego rapidly changes the stylistic masks behind which we imagine its ironical, rallying presence, that shows off with ease the procedures and 'the manners'. Far from being immanent to the taken pattern, the author has, on the contrary, a transcendent position, constantly placing himself above and beyond it and taking a critical distance from it. Parody remains, without doubt, an essential constant in Sorescu's poetry, a poetry that configures itself as a reaction to the stimulus of the literary convention, to the stereotypy of the lyrical language, or as a reply to previous poetical constructions. Defining itself by opposition to *something else*, it cannot be affirmed that Sorescu's poetry expresses itself with less conspicuousness and naturalness. De-mythicization of the poetical forms recognized by tradition, embezzlement of the solemn forms in the daily ridiculousness, Sorescu's poetry can be regarded – and it was actually considered so – an immersion in the word's original layers, as a recovery of its mythical roots or as a nostalgia of its symbolic archetypal purity. The poet, fully aware of engraving his existence in a universe of signs, of formal hypertrophy and of atrophy of the signified, nostalgically looks back to the original essence, to the natural primordially of things, as if he was looking at a forbidden territory, in which he can no longer enter.

The word is, for Sorescu, an imperfect substitute, lacking essentiality and realness, a scanty suggestion of the inexhaustible reality, a culpable face of the un-authentic. That is why the return to the authentic, to spontaneity by regenerating the word, by the priming of its meaningful force into new symbolic configurations and constellations motivates the substratum of this poem, which denounces with acuity the man's alienation from realness throughout the word, together with its bookish and artificial aura: 'Mi-e frig în cămașa asta/ De litere/ Prin care intră ușor/ Toate intemperiiile'. At the same time, the high exacerbation of this tension – *natural/human, reality/word* – appears as a disontological transformation of the poet's life, as a substitution of the alive throughout the mechanical and bookish: 'Unde s-o fi tipărind/ Viața asta a mea,/ Că e plină de greșeli/ Inadmisibile'. If the verb is, in Sorescu's vision, just a depreciation of the totality of elements, of the empirical reality, the poetical act reveals itself as a possibility of salvation from a proliferant reality, the art appearing (also in a softly ironical register, of course) under the species of its soteriologic features, which were always attributed to it, as in the poem 'Sepia': 'Rechinii și șerpui de mare/ Vin grămadă spre mine,/ Și dacă nu-i scriu cu cerneală/ Mă mănâncă (...) Dați-vă la o parte,/ Lucruri pe care v-am învins./ În legitimă apărare, /Trebuie să transcriu cu cerneală/ Toată apa oceanului'. Therefore, the creative act is understood as a transcription of the phenomenal existence and, in a prolific display of forms, as a taming of things throughout poetical meaning ascribing.

Another major dimension of Marin Sorescu's lyrics, reaffirmed in the majority of his volumes, is the playful, spectacular one. Not just the space of a gratuity of events, of a world that occurs following a carnivalesque logic and direction, but also the space of the bliss of a world that has an unproblematic relief (though in the subtext we can also sense its tragic earthquakes), the space of play is most often configured throughout the intrusion of some words and terms of maximum resonance in the ritual of the daily gestures, fact that modifies the set out of the lines of poetical importance. Thus, it is only natural for the accents to be considerably moved from the serious, problematizing formulas (their meaning is always embezzled towards ridiculousness and gratuity) to the 'laic' formulas, that do not have such a big symbolic load and are detached from the most rough, familiar language: 'Ne spălăm cu clăbucul tău, soare/ Săpunul nostru fundamental,/ Pus la îndemână/ Pe polița cerului./ Întindem mereu brațele spre tine/ Și ne

frecăm bine cu lumină,/ De ne dor oasele de atâta fericire./ O, ce veselie/ E pe pământ dimineța/ Ca într-un spălător de internat./ Când copiii iau apă în gură/ Și se stropesc unii pe alții./ Deocamdată nu știm de unde să luăm/ Și cele mai bune prosoape -/ Și ne ștergem pe față cu moartea' (*Matinală*).

The reason of the spectacle, of the performance is marked in Sorescu's creation by the frequency of some terms from this field (juggler, balls, mask etc.), as well as by the presence in the making the text of some theatrical procedures, which 'dramatize' the poetical substance. Knowledge is placed under the auspices of the performance, the approaching of reality is accomplished by visualization. Sight becomes the primordial gnosiological instrument, which discovers the theatre of the world, the reality is questioned by 'looking out the window', a modality of searching the permeability of the world, like in the poem *Atavism*: 'Uitatul pe fereastră a devenit un tic,/ Toată lumea se uită pe fereastră./ Citește, spală, iubește, moare/ și din când în când dă fuga/ Și se uită pe fereastră./ Ce vreți să vedeți?/ După cine priviți?/ Luați-vă gândul, cine a fost de venit a venit,/ Cine a fost de plecat a plecat, / Cine a fost de trecut prin dreptul vostru a trecut'. The poet himself is nothing more than a juggler, fully aware of his gnosiological limits, a demiurge in the second instance who, far from manipulating the elements, only handles 'balls and circles', lifeless substitutes of realness. Following the same order, the poet denounces the annihilation of the essence by its substitute phenomenon, the mortification of the spirit under the pressure of the letter, in an ironical-reflexive poem, that brings absurd suggestions and insinuates the idea of the evil game between *to seem* and *to be*, between predictable and unpredictable: 'Străzile erau înșesate de haine/ Care își vedeau de treburi.// Unele alergau să nu întârzie la servicii,/ Altele flecăreau/ Ori intrau în magazinele de îmbrăcăminte/ De unde ieșeau cu modele noi.// Iar eu căutam oameni./ Știam că trebuie să se afle/ Fie în buzunarul de la vestă/ Fie în fața ori în spatele hainelor/ Anexați cu o clemă' (*Vișune*).

The Eros – a theme for which poets always felt that a solemn, ritual attitude of ceremonial ecstasy would be perfectly appropriate – is this time ridiculed, deprived of solemnity, inserted into a daily scenario. The tone of ironic badinage is obvious, the invocation is replaced by the bantering interrogation, the word, extracted from the familiar register of the language, is far from indicating the sublime of the erotic feeling, being rather erosive with its meanings of essentiality and ineffable. Everything seems to be unproblematic here, the quiet takes the place of existential tension, the drama blurs its outlines, transforming itself into a domestic farce, the poetical ego, rational and ironic, refuses itself any pathetic expansions, love is aligned to the mechanic of every day's gestures: 'Ți-am rămas dator o stare de spirit/ Mai elevată și asta din cauza ta./ Nu că aş vrea să-ți reproșez ceva, dimpotrivă/ Ia-o drept compliment adus frumuseții tale/ Care – ți-o spun pe șleau – prostește'. Other times, love appears purely as a calligraphic exercise, as a somehow mechanical repeat of the versions of the Eros with the view of achieving the feeling, of perfecting the experience: 'Când o dragoste/ la care lucram mai demult/ Mi-a reușit/ Atunci o trec pe curat, /Pe inima altei femei./ Natura a fost înțeleaptă/ Creând mai multe femei/ Decât bărbați/ Pentru că ne putem desăvârși sentimentul/ Folosind un mare număr/ De ciorne'. Love develops, as Mihaela Andreescu also notices, in a sort of eternal present, which glorifies the ephemeral happiness, in an environment incapable to favour the clamorous invocations, but rather to give free play to the ironical findings of a situation built in full prosaism. Marin Sorescu descends, as it was affirmed before, the poetical language in the street, in the daily, drawing for the big themes new coordinates, activating – throughout their impact with common language – new symbolic, meaningful valences. This is, partially, the explanation for the audience that

Sorescu's lyric enjoyed/enjoys, a lyric that suggests a drastic reduction of the hiatus between life and art, between the empirical experience and its artistic expression.

A representative poem for Sorescu's creation is *Echerul*, which is part of the volume *Tușiți*, appeared in 1970; it illustrates Sorescu's parody and fanciful manner but, equally, it reveals a vision on literature. Between life and poetry there is a correspondence with multiple meanings and roles. In an afterword to *Tinerețea lui Don Quijote*, Sorescu mentions that 'the function of poetry is mostly one of knowledge. It must include philosophy. The poet is either a thinker, or nothing (...). The authentic poet is a philosopher and even more than that: in addition, he has intuition. His thoughts, his fears, his sadness are transformed in an instrument of research. The lens, the tube and the knowledge about air become a telescope that scans the sky. I believe that a poet of genius can only throughout poetical intuition discover a new star which would later be confirmed by scientists, by a calculus of parameters. It is all that poetry can give. Its final taste is however bitterness. This does not mean pessimism, but only lucidity. Live with full knowledge of the case'. In the poem *Echerul*, the poet transfers – in the spirit of his playful and ironic instinct – an instrument of scientific knowledge, of rigour and of spirit of geometry, in the field of the literary work's imponderable and sense of finesse. Like a researcher who proceeds to the development of an event, the poet observes the changes that occur in the structure of the literary text, in the order and in the functionality of the words keeping, all along the text, a mimed seriousness, an acted impersonality, as if he was an actor mastering the grimaces and the mimics that the role requires: 'Echerul, folosit și în matematică,/ Devine tot mai mult/ Un instrument literar.// Cu el poți citi cu succes/ O mulțime de opere.// Îl așezi frumos/ Pe prima pagină,/ Și nu citești decât ce scapă/ În afara liniilor lui/ De lemn.// Împuținată,/ Cuvintele se umflă/ Ca niște broaște,/ Sugând și sensul celor ascunse./ O jumătate de verb/ Te face să urlă/ De acțiunea tuturor romanelor/ Din viitorul deceniu'.

Thus, the poet's irony wends its way to those proceedings of literature investigation that want to capture the living thrill of the text throughout some excessively rationalizing methods and practices. Noticing the efficacy of this aleatory amputation method in the reduction to a minimum of literary expression, with the help of the square, the poet suggests – with the same parody and ironical ease – the extension of the method to the sphere of the phenomena of every day's existence. The daily can also be measured, map-drawn, adjusted with the help of a square, by means of an instrument of rational exercise, of intellectual lucidity. Obviously, we here have an ironic step of subtext, a relative turn of the sentence that puts under a question mark specifically this kind of intrusion of mathematical logic and rational factor, in a field that most of the time escapes the control of lucidity, having ineffable parameters: 'Apoi echerul se poate extinde/ Și în viața de toate zilele./ Sunetele, imaginile, sufletele/ Sunt exagerat de mari,/ Ascultați vorbele cu echerul,/ Priviți spectacolele cu echerul.// Nu vă aventurați/ Într-o dragoste adevărată/ Fără un echer la butonieră./ Și de asemenea, seara înainte de culcare/ Puneți la capul patului un echer/ Pentru visele voastre de aur'. The poetical communication is, all along the text, neuter and sober, the sentence has a dynamism given by concision and by the deliverance from the ornaments of the figures of speech. The stylistic ornaments are almost entirely absent, and the enunciations are precise, with camouflaged metaphors, hidden behind prosaic images, of daily use. Beyond the mimed solemnity we can guess the signs of the irony and parody of a poet who reconsiders the relations between things and beings, granting to the existence new meanings and nuances of lyrical perception. 'The square' becomes a symbol of the dogmatic spirit, of that spirit which amputates the meanings and the value of things, in a total inadequacy towards their

intimate being. Essentially, the poem *Echerul* can be regarded as a playful fantasy in which the feeling of atrocious and grotesque is hidden behind the 'soothing' impersonality of some enunciations.

Also representative is the poem *Harta*, published in the volume *Tinerețea lui Don Quijote* in 1968, which illustrates perfectly Marin Sorescu's playful, fanciful and spectacular spirit. Here also, the serious events, the fundamental elements of the human condition and existence are transcribed in an ironical and playful nib, are passed from the register of seriousness to the register of badinerie. Essentially, the poem can be read as a lyrical self-portrait, a self-portrait drawn in the dimension of parable and allegory. The human body, the essence itself, appear under the species of a map, where the feelings and experiences are reduced to conventional-geographical proportions: 'Mai întâi să vă arăt cu bățul/ Cele trei părți de apă/ Care se văd foarte bine/ În oasele și țesuturile mele:/ Apa e desenată cu albastru.// Apoi cei doi ochi,/ Stelele mele de mare.// Partea cea mai uscată,/ Fruntea,/ Continuă să se formeze zilnic/ Prin încrețirea scoarței pământului'. The tension of the lyrism results, in this poem, from the meeting and even superposition of two different fields, the geography and the anatomy and physiology. One explains the other. The human body, with its imponderables and appearances, with the more or less visible rhythms, is poetically circumscribed by resorting to the map-drawing dimension, fact that reduces the proportions conventionally, reproducing them schematically, giving them a logical structure. On the other hand, even the ineffable elements, feelings, aspirations, the dynamic of the spring towards *something else* – part of the human being's essence – appear in the rigorous modulation of the map ('Insula aceasta de foc e inima,/ Locuită dacă nu mă înșel.// Dacă văd un drum/ Mă gândesc că acolo trebuie să fie/ Picioarele mele,/ Altfel drumul n-ar avea nici un rost.// Dacă văd marea/ Mă gândesc că acolo trebuie să-mi fie/ Sufletul, altfel marmora ei/ N-ar face valuri'). Despite the appearance of Gnosticism offered by the lines, the poet is aware that on the 'map' of his own being there are also 'white stains', regions which are not designated by the contours of the map, spaces which are impossible to catch in a geographic symbol, blanks of representation: 'Mai există desigur/ Și alte pete albe/ Pe trupul meu,/ Cum ar fi gândurile și întâmplările mele/ De mâine.// Cu simțurile,/ Cele cinci continente/ Descriu zilnic două mișcări:/ O mișcare de rotație în jurul soarelui/ Și una de revoluție/ În jurul morții...'. Poet of deconstruction of the poetical taboos, Sorescu is nonetheless a poet of construction, articulating with an artisan's scrupulosity a viable artistic universe, of an indisputable inner coherence. A coherence of this kind is explained, perhaps, by this poem's unity of artistic technique, but also by a reaffirmed poetical pattern, with natural modulations in every 'piece', resembling the individual who, in the biological world, repeats with mathematical precision, throughout hereditary accumulation, the main features of the species of affiliation, but in the same time remains unique. In Sorescu's creations, a personal style, as an imprint of a powerful lyrical personality can extremely easily be perceived. If Malraux somewhere noted that style is 'the reduction of the world to a specific meaning', it is not less true that Sorescu's style is nothing but polarization, assemblage of poetical objects depending on an ironical (pre)disposition, reduction of the world's meanings to certain ironical-fantastical constants, in other words modification of the terms of realness by bantering methods that give a relative character to the meanings, drop the temperature of the poetical discourse's gravity and affectively disengage their creator who always has not so much the conscience of a limit in his creation, but the certainty of an uninterrupted distance between the written text and the creator, of an unbreakable alienation established between letter and spirit.

The poem *Jucării* is part of the volume *Tinerețea lui Don Quijote* (1968) and is the poem of a playful spectacular, in which the author tries to represent the mixture between gravity and ridiculous, which is a constituent of the human condition. The thing that gives originality to a creation of this kind is the mixture of ludic and gravity or, better yet, the transposition of the play in a serious register. From this inversion of the terms, from this alloy of poetical registers results the more profound poetical thrill, the lyrism in its most profound and authentic dimension: ‘Noi care suntem îngrozitor de mari,/ Care n-am mai căzut pe gheață/ Dintre cele două războaie,/ Ori dacă din greșală am alunecat vreodată,/ Ne-am și fracturat un an,/ Unul din anii noștri importanți și țepeni/ De gips.../ O, noi cei îngrozitori de mari/ Simțim câteodată/ Că ne lipsesc jucăriile’. The play is perceived by the author as an escape from the constraints of space and time, as an evasion from the pressure of any kind of determinisms, as a Utopian revenge of the imaginary before a diminished realness, with limited dimensions as meaning and relief (‘Avem tot ce ne trebuie,/ Dar ne lipsesc jucăriile./ Ne e dor de optimismul/ Inimii de vată a păpușilor/ Și de corabia noastră/ Cu trei rânduri de pânze,/ Care merge la fel de bine pe apă,/ Ca și pe uscat’).

Toys are the elements throughout which the statute of the child modifies its form, its structure, transferring itself in the field of the imaginary. Succedance of reality, toys are – simultaneously – bridges towards another world, symbolic and fictive but, at the same time, liberating, being able to defeat the terror of time and space and to model the dimensions of reality in conformity with the sovereign rules of the game, which turns to fluid the rules, turns relative any kind of determinism and stimulates the actual activity: ‘Am vrea să încălecăm pe un cal de lemn/ Și calul să necheze o dată cu tot lemnul,/ Iar noi să spunem: «Du-ne undeva,/ Nu ne interesează locul,/ Pentru că oriunde în viață/ Noi avem de gând să facem/ Niște fapte grozave’’. The end of the poem proclaims a distance, a limit, a hiatus; the distance between toys and adult age, between maturity and game, between the fictive horizon, full of benefits and liberating which the play sets up and the age of rationality (‘O, cât ne lipsesc uneori jucăriile!/ Dar nu putem nici măcar să fim triști/ din cauza asta/ Și să plângem din tot sufletul,/ Ținându-ne cu mâna de piciorul scaunului,/ Pentru că noi suntem niște oameni foarte mari/ Și nu mai e nimeni mai mare ca noi/ Care să ne mângâie’). *Jucării* (*Toys*) is a representative poem for Sorescu’s lyrism, at the same time playful and grave, resuming the tragedy of the existence and simultaneously transposing it into the minor scale of irony and parody. The poet illustrates, in his verse, the drama of the grown-up human being which lost the connections with his/her own childhood, with his/her own past, a human being that no longer has access to the age of ingenuity and naivety at the beginning. The grown-up human being delivers himself/herself, by his/her very condition, to a irremediable loneliness. The style of the poem is characterized by an absolute naturalness of phrasing, by simplicity of the poetical diction, by the clearness of writing. The words belong to the usual language and the figures of style are few, fact that amplifies the idea of prosaism to which the poet voluntarily resorts to. The “Depoetization” that is hereby felt is not – in the words of Nicolae Manolescu – ‘renunciation to poetical, but a way of conveying it’. Marin Sorescu is equally a poet of serious questions on existence and a poet with a playful and spectacular structure, who frames up ‘events’ of his own existence in the register of prosaism and irony.

In the volume *Tușiți*, which also contains the poem *Halebarda*, Marin Sorescu rends profitable the lines of actions learnt from the previous books, with a more powerful accent put upon prosaism, on the focalisation of ordinary existence scenes, to which he gives a new meaning or which he regards from a new perspective, fact that offers a certain symbolical amplitude.

Eugen Simion notices that this volume ‘maintains in the line of previous poems, not one step ahead, not one step behind. The poet has learnt an ingenious technique and uses it in an infinite number of cases. But cases can interest and poetry can reach high meanings. The new fact in this volume is the renunciation to famous myths. Marin Sorescu stops making – with obstinacy – a lyric of reversed myths, usually avoids the bookish motives and gives the verse a higher freedom of movement. The subjects are taken from everywhere, with the idea – accurate, of course – that the poem is not a feature of things, but a feature of the one who looks at them. The Universe has as much poetry as we put inside it. Sorescu puts a certain ostentation in proving this fact, choosing, as a pretext of meditation, the objects that are the farthest from the current prejudice of poetical beauty’. *Halebarda* is a poem in which the poet stages a common lyrical situation. The stake is, therefore, placed on the existential ridiculous, on the banality of everyday gestures, in disregard of any temptation or shallow poetization. The poetical text has a narrative fluency, with the development of the epical thread, with the presence of some ‘characters’ and dialogues, with an introduction, a plot and a dénouement that can pretty well be delimited and identified. The introduction inserts us in the space and time of the poetical spectacle, throughout some short notes, which capture the movement or the revelatory detail, focusing upon some prosaic, habitual gestures and retorts of limited amplitude: ‘Înghesuială în troleibuz,/ Balamuc mare./ Oameni cu pachete în brațe,/ Cu microbi/ Și, cum stau eu pe scaun,/ În spatele meu,/ Un moș cu o cazma - / Naiba știe la ce-i trebuie s-o care acasă./ O ține de coadă ca pe o halebardă/ La ușa cortului împărătesc.// E bătrân moșul de când lumea,/ Are o pată mare pe ochiul drept,/ Îi mai și tremură mâna pe deasupra./ «Ăsta o să-mi scape cazmaua în cap -/ Mă gândesc, lua-l-ar dracul!»’. The ‘plot’ is revealed when the ‘old man’ starts to drop his ‘halberd’ spade and to hit everybody. Obviously, underneath the sometimes funny prosaic gestures, in Sorescu’s clearest style, a more serious meaning, a deeper significance can be discovered. The trip by trolley bus itself can be similar to the itinerary of life, to the route of the destiny, a route through which every one of us travels: ‘El e un moșulică simpatic de altfel,/ Politicos,/ Vorbăreț chiar./ Zice: «Nici o grijă, țin cu strășnicie de afurisita asta/ De cazma!»/ Și cu toate astea, din când în când o scapă:/ Poc, poc, poc!/ Trei sferturi din pasageri au fost deja bubuiți./ Moșul continuă să scape cazmaua,/ S-o blesteme și să-și ceară scuze.// «Sunt neputincios, păcatele mele,/ Dar n-aveți nici o grijă,/ Vă rog frumos să nu vă alarmați,/ Afurisita asta de cazma n-o să-mi mai scape/ Acum și-n vecii vecilor./ Nu vedeți ce strâns o țin?»/ Și tocmai atunci – pleosc!/ Drumul e plin de gropi,/ Hurducăturile sunt hurducături’. At the same time as the poetical text advances towards the dénouement, the colloquial tone takes more and more control over the lyrical speech, the atmosphere gets a tragic and comic paleness, a mix of grotesque and good-natured irony infiltrates in the folds of the poem. In the end of the poem, the lyrical tension diminishes, the drama reduced its intensity, the temperature of the text reaches normality: ‘Și șoferul ăsta nici nu observă,/ El își face cursa și ce să-l intereseze:/ Duce pasagerii vii sau pasagerii morți – tot aial!/ Altfel nu-mi explic de ce nu oprește niciodată/ În nici o stație,/ De ce nu face o haltă,/ Am putea să-l dăm în judecată pe criminalul ăsta ramolit,/ Mai ales că, după câte observ,/ I-a cam lichidat pe toți,/ Și acum s-a proțăpit chiar în spatele meu/ Cu halebarda lui -/ «Șofer, hei șofer!»/ Dar te mai poate auzi cineva?/ Autobuzul merge, poate are plan să meargă până la capăt./ Hurducăturile se întetesc,/ Moșul a și intrat în vorbă cu mine,/ E din ce în ce mai politicos/ Și începem să discutăm despre vreme’. Farce of everyday existence, seen from a grotesque, ironic register, *Halebarda* is, at the same time, an allegory of the destiny seen as a trivial journey by trolley bus.

Not few are the poems in which Marin Sorescu suggests himself to systematically take down the big myths from their sacred pedestal, to deprive of solemnity the articulations of the undeniably prestigious grave themes. The myth is many times inserted into the epical, lyrical scheme of some trivial events with strong prosaic meaning, which gives new meanings, a reduced amplitude or a distinguished tonality. This propensity towards the reinterpretation and the refunctionality of the myth is also observed by Eugen Simion, who notices that ‘the pleasure that all young poets have in reversing myths towards meanings that they desire takes, at Marin Sorescu, the form of a systematic contestation, with various effects. The biblical myth of the driving away from paradise, that has inspired libraries full of serious exegesis, is laughably explained through the erotic insatiability of the first man. The poetical imagination demolishes the great meanings of the sacred happening: God made Eve out of Adam’s rib, because the man was sad and did not know what was missing; learning the method, Adams begins to pull out of his ribs more odalisques, whenever the official Eve goes to the market to buy gold, myrrh and incense’. The reconsideration of the driving away from paradise myth is made from the perspective of the poet’s playful instinct, which finds – in the solemn aspects of life and myths – certain sides of diminished meaning, treating the grave aspects with irony, parody or humour.

The biblical creation of the woman is embezzled towards the farce through the creative instinct of the man, who makes himself a whole series of unofficial Eves, in order to satisfy an overdeveloped erotic appetite: ‘Cu toate că se afla în rai,/ Adam se plimba pe alei preocupat și trist/ Pentru că nu știa ce-i mai lipsește.// Atunci Dumnezeu a confecționat-o pe Eva/ Dintr-o coastă a lui Adam./ Și primului om atât i-a plăcut această minune,/ Încât chiar în clipa aceea/ Și-a pipăit coasta imediat următoare,/ Simțindu-și degetele frumos fulgerate/ De niște sâni tari și coapse dulci/ Ca de contururi de note muzicale./ O nouă Evă răsărise în fața lui./ Tocmai își scosese oglinjoara/ Și se ruja pe buze./ «Asta e viața!» a oftat Adam/ Și-a mai creat încă una.// Și tot așa. De câte ori Eva oficială/ se întorcea cu spatele,/ Sau pleca la piață după aur, smirnă și tămâie,/ Adam scotea la lumină o nouă cadână/ Din haremul lui intercostal’. The end of the poem, in a ‘point of a joke’, also suggests an artistic finality of Adam’s action of multiplication of the feminine patterns, which could also be considered as an escape from the aesthetical canons, as a breaking of the pre-established patterns, as a revolt against any kind of clichés. The driving away from paradise is also equivalent, from this point of view, with a sanction of iconoclasm, of the trespassing of the existent aesthetical rules: ‘Dumnezeu a observat/ Această creație deșăntată a lui Adam./ L-a chemat la el, l-a sictirit dumnezeiește,/ Și l-a izgonit din rai/ Pentru suprarrealism’. Obviously, the poet’s reflex of parody does not have too profound meanings here. What is interesting is the embezzlement towards farce and irony of a myth that is so acknowledged and complex.

A grotesque, comical vision on hell can be seen in the poem *Frescă*, from the volume *Moartea ceasului* (1966). N. Manolescu, commenting upon this book, observed that ‘the modernity of the formula is given by its intellectuality. But the poet’s lucid detaching from poetry does not necessarily mean irony, humour. Contrary to the immediate impression, he does not truly destruct the gravity of the profession, but only commits the gesture of destroying it, he is not ironical, unconfident, he pretends. If the debut’s parodies were not really the pleasure to live through others, but that of trying his/her powers while being sheltered by a model, the illicit practising of talent, probably poems cannot be strangers from this reserve. It seems to me that the note of Marin Sorescu’s poetry is not mainly irony, but reserve, the disguise of an essence of ingenuity, dissimulation. The poet is sentimental and timid, generous and delicate, capable of big

soaring, which he is too shy to recognize, with gestures of a retarded knight, cultivating a kind of donquijotism'. The myth of hell is coloured, in this way of dissimulation, with tones of parody. The sufferance of the damned is turned relative by the usage of some words or collocations from the field of laughable or of utilitarian triteness. 'The valuation' of the sinners is, hereby, produced throughout their selection and grouping into two distinct categories. Women go, firstly, through a process of dizinsectization; from their mind, all the accessories which used to formulate their specificity are eliminated, then they are distributed in the boiling cauldrons ('În iad păcătoșii/ Sunt valorificați la maximum.// Femeilor li se scot din cap,/ Cu o pensetă,/ Clamele, agrafele, inelele, brățările,/ Pânzeturile, lenjeria de pat./ După aceea sunt aruncate/ În clocotul unor cazane,/ Să fie atente la smoală,/ Să nu dea în foc'). Worthy of interest, in this poem, as well as in others, is the poet's capacity to plasticize the notions, to give relief to the abstractions, to suggestively unite the things of heavy materiality with the immaterial, subjective and vague words ('Apoi unele/ Sunt transformate în suferințe/ Cu care se cară la domiciliul dracilor pensionari/ Păcatele calde'). Men have another fate, they are used for the most difficult works. The poem ends in Sorescu's acknowledged style, with an embezzlement of the meaning towards farce, grotesque and illogic: 'Bărbații sunt și ei folosiți/ La cele mai grele munci,/ Cu excepția celor foarte păroși,/ care sunt torși din nou/ Și făcuți preșuri'. The vision on hell is a hallucinating one, but the terrifying element is doubled here by a feeling of derision and of a spectacle that is staged with surrealist grace. The poetical images are extracted from the delirious imaginary, but captured with an exquisite acuity of the details, focalized with an excellent descriptive verve. The grotesque parody and carnivalesque combine, in the poem *Frescă*, in order to contribute to the achievement of an ironical allegory of the afterlife, from which a deeper meaning is not missing, though.

In the volume *Tinerețea lui Don Quijote* (1969), the playful is the is the favourite lyrical proceeding. The familiarity with things, as well as the ambiguity with which the elements of existence are circumscribed, the embezzlement of the speech towards familiar, colloquial communication, all these are defining elements for Sorescu's poetry in this book. Therefore, Ion Pop notices that 'the great, serious existential themes of poetry ever are «treated» in the same casual tonality. The relation with the cosmos, the spectacle of life and death appear transcribed in a code of the quotidian, immediately accessible without visible anxieties. Present, however, in the deep layers of the text, they take – in any case – the appearance of the usual, of the normal (...). Marin Sorescu built himself a style from the expression of fundamental existential attitudes in a «prosaic» register and this fact hereby interests us as a possible opening of the poem towards the universe of the play'. The poem *Semne* (*Signs*) is completely representative for a manner of writing and of thinking the world and the existence in its ensemble such as this. The man is hereby seen from the perspective of his availability to find and to interpret the 'signs' of the universe. Surrounded by so many things which mean something, the lyrical ego feels, in the end, the terror of the 'signs', becomes the prisoner of his own capacity to decipher the semantic reflexes of the things. The world, in its entirety, transforms, therefore, in a hellish space, in which the meanings are detached from the things and puts into chains the imagination of the poetical ego.

Signs themselves tend to become, eventually, things, their meanings turn into nothing, become objects, throughout an excess of significance given by the thinking subject: 'Dacă te-ntâlnești cu un scaun,/ E semn bun, ajungi în rai./ Dacă te-ntâlnești cu un munte,/ E semn rău, ajungi în scaun./ Dacă te-ntâlnești cu carul mare,/ E semn bun, ajungi în rai./ Dacă te-ntâlnești cu un melc,/ E semn rău, ajungi în melc./ Dacă te-ntâlnești cu o femeie,/ E semn bun, ajungi în rai./ Dacă te-ntâlnești cu o față de masă,/ E semn rău, ajungi în sertar./ Dacă te-ntâlnești cu un

șarpe,/ E semn bun, moare și tu ajungi în rai./ Dacă șarpele te-ntâlnește pe tine,/ E semn rău, mori și el ajunge în rai./ Dacă mori,/ E semn rău'. The solution to this hallucinating world of signs that escape the lines of the current significance, to this semantic desegregation of the world is irony, throughout which 'signs' are turned into relative, their tyrannical contour becomes relaxed, their grip loses its alienating strength. That is exactly why the end of the poem, concise and austere as an axiom, has the role to loosen the tension of the poem's drama, to suggest a way out of this hellish labyrinth of signs, which bears the stamp of the absurd and of the lack of meaning ('ferește-te de acest semn,/ Și de toate celelalte'). The poem *Semn* has a repetitive structure, a balanced architecture, with phrasal symmetries which suggest precisely the labyrinth structure of a universe marked by the tyranny of the signs, from which the meaning tends to withdraw. Carnavalesque, this illogical spectacle translates, in the end, the human being's fear of becoming nothing, the terrifying feeling of void of the meaning that results precisely from the abundance of the significant, from the reassertion of the expression, from the de-subjectifying of the words which become conventional instruments of a sterile knowledge and do not derive from a real need of essentiality and metaphysical shiver. *Ochii* (*The Eyes*) is part of the volume *Poeme*, appeared in 1965. This volume's creations betray, as G. Călinescu notices 'an exceptional capacity to capture the fantastic of the humble things and the greatness of the common themes. He is enthusiast and drunk with the universe, childish, sensitive and thoughtful till the edge of the terror regarding the novelty of the existence, romantic in the wide meaning of the term'. The theme of the poem is one of knowledge. For the poet, the human being in his/her entirety becomes a huge eye, in which the existence mirrors itself in all its forms, avatars and reflexes. Knowledge is, therefore, perceived under the sign of the visual, of the look that favours the assuming of the surfaces and contours of the universe. The whole body is transformed into an enormous organ of sight, the eye becomes the being of the poet, a lens of meat that slowly absorbs the forms of the world: 'Ochii mi se măresc tot mai mult,/ Ca două cercuri de apă,/ Mi-au acoperit toată fruntea/ Și jumătate din piept./ În curând vor fi tot atât de mari/ Ca și mine./ Mai mari decât mine,/ Mult mai mari decât mine:/ Eu nu voi fi decât un punct negru/ În mijlocul lor'. In the circle of the being who became a look will enter, as the poet suggests, the whole universe, with all its elements, a universe that will expand its image in these huge eyes, in this pure energy of the visual, which bears a poetical and gnosiological meaning: 'Și ca să nu mă simt singur/ Voi lăsa să intre în cercul lor/ Foarte multe lucruri:/ Luna, soarele, pădurea și marea/ Cu care voi continua să mă uit/ La lume'. Poem that illustrates the problematic of visual perception, as an instance of human knowledge, drawing the contours for a sort of lyrical phenomenology of the look, *Ochii* is made of unequal verses, of concise, concentrated images. The poet's favourite proceeding here is the use of hyperboles, the exacerbation of the features and dimensions of the things, fact which offers a suggestion of the absurdity that appears in the order of the world and of the words.

In the book entitled *Poeme*, Marin Sorescu brings to life a proceeding that will also be rendered profitable in the other volumes – it is the re-transcription of the dimensions of some myths, the reconsideration of the grave themes of culture, philosophy and literature, from the perspective of irony or of the reflex of parody. Nicolae Manolescu analyzes this proceeding, disassembling its mechanisms: 'In *Poemele* from 1965, as well as in *Moartea ceasului* or in *Tineretea lui Don Quijote*, the frequent proceeding is to treat in a burlesque and familiar style myths, legendary characters and, generally, great themes of literature. On the lyrical stage there is a big squash of celebrities: Destiny, Death, Leda, Shakespeare, Life, Sun, Don Juan, Poe's Raven, Adam, Eve,

Troy, Manole the Master, Illness, Laocoon, Atlantida, Wilhelm Tell and a multitude of others. Originality begins from the way of talking about them, namely in a language of great familiarity. The poet pulls their moustaches, shows them the tongue (or demands them to pull out their own), gives them a filip, treats them with irony, places them with their back turned to the public, strips them naked or forces them to exchange clothes. The first impression, which guaranteed the success of the public, is that the great themes are, in this way, refreshed, turned likeable, throughout a good dose of humour, because the poet does not economize the quibbles, the jokes or the unusual associations, moreover that the motives which were known as difficult and profound and with which savants racked their brains for centuries, are in fact accessible to anyone’.

The poem *Shakespeare* is emblematic for this kind of assuming the major themes through a setting from the burlesque and farce species, of badinerie, of parody relativity. Sorescu rewrites the intellectual biography of Shakespeare placing it in conjunction with the biblical motif of world genesis. The stature of *Hamlet’s* author is enormously proportioned, in comparison with that of divinity. Shakespeare is like a demiurge that creates a fictional world, a universe in all its representative dimensions and aspects, through the founding verb, of the artistic logos: “Shakespeare a creat lumea în şapte zile./ În prima zi a făcut cerul, munţii şi prăpastiile sufleteşti./ În ziua a doua a făcut râurile, mările, oceanele/ Şi celelalte sentimente -/ Şi le-a dat lui Hamlet, lui Iulius Caesar, lui Antoniu, Cleopatrei şi Ofeliei,/ Lui Othello şi altora,/ Să le stăpânească, ei şi urmaşii lor,/ În vecii vecilor./ În ziua a treia a strâns toţi oamenii/ Şi i-a învăţat gusturile:/ Gustul fericirii, al iubirii, al deznădejdi,/ Gustul geloziei, al gloriei şi așa mai departe,/ Până s-au terminat toate gusturile”.

The poetry is actually written in two registers that are more important as discursive functionality and as expressive role: one of gravity and solemnity, materialized in a tone almost liturgical, and one of derision, of the relativity of the ample chords by which in the elements of high resonance and major scale, a prosaic, deriding representation is inserted: „Atunci au sosit şi nişte indivizi care întârziaseră./ Creatorul i-a mângâiat pe cap cu compătimire,/ Şi le-a spus că nu le rămâne decât să se facă/ critici literari/ Şi să-i conteste opera./ Ziua a patra şi a cincea le-a rezervat râsului./ A dat drumul clovnilor/ Să facă tumbe,/ Şi i-a lăsat pe regi, pe împăraţi/ Şi pe alţi nefericiţi să se distreze./ În ziua a şasea a rezolvat unele probleme administrative:/ A pus la cale o furtună,/ Şi l-a învăţat pe regele Lear/ Cum trebuie să poarte coroană de paie./ Mai rămăseseră câteva deşuri de la facerea lumii/ Şi l-a creat pe Richiard al III-lea.” The end of the poem preserves the anterior familiar, colloquial tone and the serious theme of death is lessened by the insertion of the adverb “little” by means of which the ending becomes relative: “În ziua a şaptea s-a uitat dacă mai are ceva de făcut./ Directorii de teatru şi umpluseră pământul cu aşişe,/ Şi Shakespeare s-a gândit că după atâta trudă/ Ar merita să vadă şi el un spectacol./ Dar mai întâi, fiindcă era peste măsură de istovit,/ S-a dus să moară puţin”.

From the combination of the theme of the creator and the biblical topos of genesis, Marin Sorescu configured a lyric space through which he offers a definition of the destiny of the creator of whole world from the so perishable body of words, from the steaming meat of the verb invested with evoking force. The drama of the creator subject to the world that he creates, but at the same time subject to his own ideals and esthetic imperatives, is acutely represented in the poem *Shakespeare*, very much representative for the fantasist and allegorical lyrism of Marin Sorescu. Together with his poems impregnated with ludic instinct, with fantasist and ironic spirit, in Sorescu’s work there are also poems that face us with unsettling visions on the existence or on

human condition. Such a poem is *Gura racului* where the author transcribes a nightmarish vision of humankind just after having escaped an apocalyptic flood and which is confronted with the terrifying threat of monstrosity, of pure instinctive manifestation, of gregarious aggressiveness, illustrated by the scabrous image of crabs, poetic symbols of animalism: “Când omenirea a ieșit din apă,/ Plină de mâl, de alge și de sare,/ Pe țărmul celălalt urcau,/ Suindu-se unul în spinarea celuilalt/ Și alunecând în mare,/ Dar săltându-se cu valul următor,/ Pe iarbă – racii.// Raci înfiorători, râioși,/ Plini de picioare ca de negi,/ Verzi de mătasea broaștei și roșii,/ Turbat de roșii pe pânțele”. A strong, merciless competition takes place between the human reign and that of crabs. The meeting between humans and crabs ends with a regression of man in the aquatic world, with a recoil in the instinctual world: “Oamenii au început să meargă/ Încercând să se acomodeze cu lumina/ Uscată a soarelui,/ Alta decât lumina din apă.// Racii au început să alerge/ În direcția opusă,// Bătând tactul cu cataligele lor pe glob/ Ca într-un piept de bărbat doborât.// Într-o zi primii oameni s-au întâlnit/ Cu primii raci,/ Fiecare cu al său./ Au fost luați la subsuori/ Și târâți în balta stătută a mării,/ Înapoi spre locuri pe unde-au mai fost/ (Ochii lor și le amintesc perfect/ După lacrimile-n formă de gorgane),/ Dar care pentru raci erau într-adevăr/ Locuri noi,/ Și ei susțineau, pe drept cuvânt,/ Că-i duc înainte”.

Two ways of seeing things, two ways of living and acting confront here. That of the human spirit that advances to the light to the values of rationality and on the other hand that of instincts, of going backwards, of regression to the shadow, to the aquatic element, to darkness, that of crabs („Abia în apă s-au dezmeticit oamenii,/ A avut loc o luptă față de toate viețuitoarele/ Și cei care reușeau să se desprindă/ Din cleștele ruginite de fier/ Au ieșit istoviți pe mal,/ Plini de mâl, de alge și sare”). The end of the poem is actually a warning and underlines the possibility that anytime the animality can restart its aggressive offensive towards the human („Respirând adânc, ei pornesc obosiți înainte,/ Dar iată, pe țărmul opus,/ Pe furiș, din umbra nămolului planetei,/ Apar înfiorători racii,/ Pornind în direcția cealaltă”). Marin Sorescu presents here an apocalyptic and terrifying picture of the danger of the human regression in front of the animality and of the gregarious element, of pure instinctual manifestation. Marin Sorescu proposes in this poem from the volume *Moartea ceasului* an allegory of writing and of the mode in which the elements of the referential are transferred in the creative imagination within the lyric text. Evidently, everything is placed under the sign of the ludic, of the game impregnated with the oneiric signs, thus the images, although veridical, don't have weight, they are inconstant and vague.

The lyric vision suggests us a feeling of restlessness, of crowdedness that takes place at the beginning of the poem. The whole reality, with all its elements, aspects, forms and colors is impatient to be transferred within the poetic text and to mirror itself on the verse canvas. The poet himself tries to establish order in this agitation, in this avalanche of referential in the esthetic register: “În fața casei în care conviețuiesc cu mine însumi/ Era o agitație nemaipomenită./ Toată omenirea se adunase acolo/ Și voia să treacă prin versurile mele.// Eu abia puteam stăvili valurile de oameni,/ Alergam de colo colo, asudat tot,/ Și împărțeam bonuri de ordine”. All reality elements are present in front of the available consciousness of the lyric self, all ask for their right to poetic existence („Erau acolo și păduri, munții și răsărituri de lună:/ Auziseră că e vorba de poezii/ Și veniseră din obișnuință./ Ca să împac și oamenii și natura,/ Eu îi alegeam pe cei mai voinici,/ Îi rugam să ia în brațe,/ Pe lângă bucuriile și necazurile lor,/ Un copac, sau un munte,/ Și numai așa le făceam vânt/ În câte o strofă”). Human presence is marked in that waiting area at the borders of poetry. The end reveals in a parodic key, the avatars of the feeling of love: Niște

femei foarte frumoase/ Țineau de patru colțuri deșertul Gobi/ Și voiau să mi-l deie cadou./ L-am mulțumit emoționat și l-am primit,/ Cu toate că mai fusesem îndrăgostit”.

In the poem *Visul* we encounter the transposition in the oneiric and ludic register of poetic problem related to the making of the lyric text. The poet imagines, somehow inverting the elements of the equation *creator/ creature* the process of transmuting the empirical elements of reality with their materiality and share in the imponderable and ineffable world of the poetic.

In *Tinerețea lui Don Quijote*, a volume published in 1968, Marin Sorescu retorts for several times to a “technique of the subtext” (E. Simion) by means of which a kind of duality of the poem structure is established, by overlapping two attitudes: one of surface, a ludic attitude, of fantasy and game and ironic fantasy and a second one, profound, by means of which are expressed the grave meanings of the world and the dramas of a lyric consciousness aggressed by history, time, duplicity or solitude. The same is true when speaking about the verisimilar of Sorescu’s poetic visions, about their “realist” or symbolic character. Thus, N. Manolescu observes on grounded reasons that “almost without exception, the commentators referred to the «realism» of Marin Sorescu’ poetry where the quotidian would have found its place almost immediately, together with the banality, prosaic and derisory of the modern existence. If we scratch with the nail the first layer of images, we find that this daily and familiar reality is a carton setting, carefully set up on a theatre stage, on which it is performed a show known from a long time and with mythical characters whose lines have been echoing in the ears of European culture for centuries.” Such a poem where the lyric imaginary is characterized by a duality of transposition is *Atlantida*. Here, a first level of the text is situated in a fantasy, ludic, parody dimension. Underneath this attitude are more grave meanings of knowledge and being.

The dominant feeling in this poem is that of insecurity and restlessness in front of a universe that is in an unstable equilibrium, in front of a declining reality, placed in an unacceptable and threatening state of fall, of ontological downfall. The poetic being as well as the lyric discourse is under the demonic auspices of downfall that transforms the ontic ecstasy into martyrage, underlining the aggressive character of time and establishing the existence as torture, all these being of course somehow in the subtext, behind the ironical and ludic tonality of the text: “Cine a construit lumea/ Pe un pământ care se lasă?// Aseară luna era deasupra ta,/ Acum e deasupra vieții sale./ Te-ai mai scufundat puțin.// Aseară țineai cerul pe creștet/ Ca pe o tavă/ Cu minuni,/ Acum el plutește mai sus.// Faceți-vă iute bagajele,/ Urcați-vă pe acoperișurile caselor,/ Urcați casele în pod,/ Cărați-vă vitele și bucatele și sentimentele în vârful munților,/ Dacă vreți să mai aveți vite și bucate – și sentimente,// Și mutați munții/ Pe pietroiul din vârf,/ Dacă se poate”.

The feeling of perishability, the state of anxiety in front of the unseen danger of downfall, of submerging in the nothing insinuates almost unnoticeably in the poetic text framework as a diffuse, unmentioned restlessness that tends to capture new territories of consciousness space. The insinuating feeling of the absurd derives from here, from this incapacity of the lyric self to communicate with the reality that continuously betrays its inconsistency and lack of table ontic foundation. Between the human consciousness, continuously looking for certitudes and equilibrium, of safety and reasons of self being, and a fluctuant unstable, insidious reality, a flagrant contradiction is established, a fundamental disagreement that the poet feels acutely. *Atlantida* is the expression of such a disagreement, of a contradiction that torments the being caught by restlessness in front of the presupposed world’s downfall. From a formal point of view the poem is made up of rapid, concise notations that transcribe the emergency state of the being,

but also repetitions and interrogations that give a more profound affectivity and subjectivity to the poetic discourse.

The myth of Don Juan was transcribed by Marin Sorescu in two poems with this title, on in the volume *Tușiți* (1970), and the other in *Astfel* (1973). The first poem presents in a fantasy and ludic manner that consecrated the poet, a projected revenge of the women deceived by Don Juan, women that decide to poison him. But as he foresees the revenge, becomes prudent and retreats in the library: “După ce le-a mâncat tone de ruj,/ Femeile,/ Înșelate în așteptările lor cele mai sfinte,/ Au găsit mijlocul să se răzbune/ pe Don Juan.// În fiecare dimineață,/ În fața oglinzii,/ După ce își creionează sprâncenele,/ Își fac buzele/ Cu șoricioaică,/ Pun șoricioaică în păr,/ Pe umerii albi, în ochi, pe gânduri,/ Pe sâni,/ Și așteaptă.// Ies albe în balcoane,/ Îl caută prin parcuri,/ Dar Don Juan, cuprins parcă de-o presimțire/ S-a făcut șoarece de bibliotecă.// Nu mai mângâie decât ediții rare,/ Cel mult broșate,/ Niciuna legată în piele,/ Decât parfumul budoarelor,/ Praful de pe antici/ I se pare mult mai rafinat”. The end of the poem offers us the key to this played tension, of this farce imagined by the poet in alert, sobre lines, in prosaic, refined images, as well („Iar ele îl așteaptă./ Otrăvite-n cele cinci simțuri – așteaptă,/ Și dacă Don Juan și-ar ridica ochii/ De pe noua lui pasiune,/ Ar vedea-n fereastra bibliotecii/ Cum zilnic este înmormântat câte un soț iubitor,/ Mort la datorie,/ În timp ce-și săruta soția/ Din greșeală”).

The second poem from the volume *Astfel*, stages another representation of the myth. The idea that is suggested here is that of completeness of the feeling of love, of love perfection. The more the number of “drafts”, women, Don Juan can practice on, the more chances he stands to modulate a complete love: “Când o dragoste/ La care lucram mai demult/ Mi-a reușit,/ Atunci o trec pe curat,/ Pe inima altei femei.// Natura a fost înțeleaptă/ Creând mai multe femei/ Decât bărbați,/ Pentru că ne putem desăvârși/ sentimentul,/ Folosind un mare număr/ de ciorne”.

Vocation and primordial purpose of the human being, love is regarded by the poet in its hyperbolic embodiment, that of Don Juan, a character that is looking for the absolute in love, by annexing an as much number of loves as possible, but risking to lose identity just because he is looking for an ideal form of love, thus confiscating too many particular forms. Marin Sorescu uses the myth giving it an objectified form, in the third person, in the first poem and a form of a greater involvement, more subjective in the second. Actually the poetic forms are much more profound, more decanted in the second creation consecrated to the mythical character. Of course what is surprising in both poems is the mix of fantasy, irony and ludic, with mimed gravity and with “solemn” significance, a mix of buffoonery and almost detected sublimity that confers creations a certain ambiguity of meaning and expression.

Poetry that de-structures and de-mythicizes the literary conventions, feeling acutely its rigidity and technical character Marin Sorescu’s lyric transcribes on the other hand with a tremendous simplicity and expressivity the shapes of a reality that always preserves its relief unpredictable. The ironic pen of the poet rewrites acutely but also with a delicate feeling of a slightly bookish badinage, the great themes of literature in an amplitude that lowers significantly the grave notes into farce and language comedy, under which one can guess quite easily the tragic dimensions of the things, the same way behind the clown mask one can suspects the crying face.

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MINIMALIST POETRY TRANSITIVITY: MIRCEA IVĂNESCU

Pointing out the intertextual propensity of Mircea Ivanescu's poetry, Radu Vancu notes that beyond the "intelligent sophistication of allusions and references, the text must remain, even for the lazy reader or without the possibility or will of checking references, poetry (...) Otherwise, the text is merely a text ..., a 'fake'." In Radu Vancu's view, discretion is the vibrating central core of Ivanescu's poetic imagination, that configures/creates a whole atmosphere woven from recoil into imaginary, repeated delays, minimalist feelings/sentiments, transitivity, expectation and inert skepticism. Not without reason, Alex. Stefanescu finds a "developed chameleonlike style", stating the epic expansion that clots the visions and fantasies, in a twilight and bookish atmosphere, where being anonymous is a faint echo, diminished up to the ordinary: "His lyricism often turns, most of the time, into the epic, and not an ordinary one, but one close to the ordinary, to everyday existence prose, to flat descriptivism. The poet has invented a few characters - *mopete, înnopteanu, rowena, the friend of Vasilescu's father, nefa* - who are followed in the most mundane moments of their daily existence: walking, napping, paying visits, chatting. All this insignificant ritual, narrated in a monotonous style, does not differ at all from the scenes of our daily existence, but, by using it, the poet does the exegesis of some feelings or emotions of a decisive importance. It's about love - taken to the mystical adoration of the beloved - the desolate feeling of loneliness, boredom, in the philosophical meaning of the word, fear of death, of the consciousness of the absurdity and futility of emphatic human gestures, the unrepeatable beauty of moments".

Similarly, Mircea Ivanescu has significant affinity with the poetry of the 80s, both in the tectonics of lyrical imagery and poetic instruments, remarkably noted, with fine critical insight, by Al. Cistelean: "Ivanescu's gene is part of the eighties, at least insofar as it covers its syntax of biographical concrete, of unheroic gesture and of surfeited rhetoric, without imaginative intuition; the misleading style of resignation, the hollow drawing of irrelevant scene, the ritual of the recovery of daily sequences put into concrete scenes, like the non-imaginative and oral display of poetry, all are tributary to Mircea Ivanescu's style. Not to mention the reserve of self irony (even if in Ivanescu's style this becomes gentle, veiled). In many of them, even if only accidentally, the ritual of typical chattering, specific to M. Ivănescu, is also identified. The "weak" vision of many of them, as well as the strategies of moving away from expressivity, always "sabotaged" when the intensity crisis becomes impending, are also translations and adaptations of Ivănescu's poetic universe. Finally, the minimalism that follows could also be grateful to Ivănescu's poetry, for he is the one that imposed the "non-significant" poetry and the poems of "non-significant", the poetry of "empty", helpless words, as well as all the strategies of redundancy with the real and of the construction through "deconstruction".

Mircea Ivănescu is, as most of his critics have remarked, a scholastic poet, following a minimalist and transitive pattern, in other words, a poet whose visions are not the result of his own sensitiveness, not that of the so called native experiences or images, but they are rather the result of his rhythms, themes, lyrical and expressive effects acquired through intensive reading, through the

assuming of the Romanian and universal “poetic library”. It has also been noticed that M. Ivănescu’s verses(poetry) from his debut to his last volumes are nothing but

reformulations, adaptations, re-fictionism of the plans, themes and motives. They are, actually, variations of the same theme. In fact, the titles of his books are representative for this vocation of rendering the anonymity and for the poetics of the ordinary that the poet stages: *Verses*, *Poems*, *Poetry*, (*Poesii*), *Poem*, *Other verses*, *Other poems*, *new Poems*. The bookish/ livresque characteristic, as attitude and poetic modality, comes, one could say, from a deficiency, from a fissure, from devitalization, and expressive and gnosiological passivity, but it must also find its roots in lucidity, in a pathos of reflexivity, through which the poet becomes literally aware of the convention that his writings bring about, mirroring, in the plenary exercise of the demystification, his own image, his own style, his hidden identity. There is what Cistelean, one of the most competent researchers of the scholastic poetry, says about this matter: “The livresque poetry appears in the shadows of the classic, reflexive and visionary one, affecting the structure of its functional nucleus (core) and lives of ostentation and excess. Its fundamental lack of equilibrium occurs at the level of sensibility, where its process of enlightenment reaches a stage of inflation, which pushes the real down a slope of loss or just alienation. The livresque mediation between the poet and the world is an exaggerated one, a magniloquence of mediation. Sensibility is radically culturalized and it can no longer find, in fact, a common point with reality, his attempt to identify the real either constantly fails or it doesn’t even occur.”

In Ivănescu’s poetry the livresque characteristic is translated especially through a faint representation of the real. Despite some details that send to the referential level, or the external universe, the world of Ivănescu’s poems is a world made up rather of reminiscence, innuendos and affective reverberation than of effective observation of the objects. Not few of these poems represent, as it has been noticed before, staging of some lyrical “events” of small sized proportions, “events” that keep their hypothetical status, and are set rather on the side of the possible, the vague, the probability than on that of reality with truthful drawing. In a poem such as: *The fight between angels and clouds or about lightning*, a parable of poetic fiction is figured, a parable always situated between the authenticity of the feelings and the conventions of the articulation: “We’re sitting on a large amount of time telling to each other / that this will also go away – and make a stage / with many actors, moving slowly through the room / surrounded by rainy weather // And the meaning, under such weather is just / that we move from one mood / to another (And we stage it -/ and we really believe that meanings get more real, / if we group them together and we give them shadows – similar to the figures / lighted by fire. And actually only us / Us alone have been here – moving from a time to another.)”. For the poet, the universe is a place of permanent metamorphosis, a transitory and ambiguous space, configured in the most disconcerting manner. Hence, the need of the lyrical self to trace an ideal peace, a protective territory of fiction, of imaginary, of staging his own voice, his own destiny. The world is thus transferred to a fictional and playful level. The real’s fluidity precipitates in the retort of the livresque, the time of strict chronology, of history slides in the time of poetry, a utopian and relative time, and the daily experiences are transferred within the limits of the fluctuating poem.

Convention and living, text and reality, subjective and poetic - these are, in fact, the aporias whose specificity transcends, plenary or in a discreet manner, from Ivănescu's lyrical discourse. The poetic text becomes, therefore, a way of reconstructing the living, an image that looms feelings, moods, affective re(ve)lations combined in a lyrical equation by a poetic self that fervently lives his aboulia, searching to resuscitate an irremediably outdated duration: "Could it be really impossible, no matter how carefully / we place them, the words – couldn't it be at all / possible to say something about this inner thing / that should be said? Only words / arranged in a dry crescendo just like / when you play a song perfectly composed, / with variations thoroughly arranged / around effects, and with the correct writing- / and to play it – and while doing this the time passes and the truth is / something different, beside outside / and you place the sound of the keyboard in a box, in this / room – and there is an evening sun outside / - as you got scared in your childhood, when you looked through the windows / and you heard, behind the piano's flower with a funeral sound. And confused – for in words / you can say nothing – you feel that outside there is / something more real, inexpressible – torn apart every second - / life with the sun you could not hang onto, shadows / flooding you in your room, the fear- / and the words, the piano's words mean / nothing." The referential signs are quite unsubstantial, rough and unpredictable in Ivănescu's poetry. A gap occurs between creative capacity and the "consciousness of convention", M. Ivănescu being, as Al. Cistelean notices, the one that opens, in our poetry, the perspective of "poetic helplessness". And the critic goes on: "The wounds caused by conventions to the creative instance, superficial or deep, treated with indifference or by subcutaneous injections, have deepened. In his vision, the poem's ontology has lost any signification. Mircea Ivănescu found the castle of poetry totally ruined and, before getting in, all the privileges of poetry or of the poet's had been abolished. But this skipping of privileges was nothing but the beginning of total degradation: the poem was deprived of its elementary and natural rights. The creative principle has found itself in the abyss, suffocated by the void around. Between creativity and the awareness of convention, the relationship has become profoundly dysfunctional because of the pre-eminence of the latter". This exacerbated awareness of convention produces in Ivănescu's poetry a sort of detachment effect through which, the poet configures the "staging", he suggests a theatrical vision/a vision steeped in theatricality, an illusory hardly possible one, watched by the specter of fictional unfulfillment.

The events, the scenes, the parables in these poems with a self-telling touch are written in a minor tonality, drown in anonymous graphics pushed to the limits of neutrality. The most important thing is that these events suggest, through their lack of weight and ontological significance, rather absences than presences, approximations, in fugitive touches of an inconsistent and unsteady truth, of a delusive reality, just like in *A visit*: "There are no more / so events for you / except for the ones you make yourself / move in front of you in such rooms / just like in a theatre play. Shadows wave in front of you / in a game whose moves you sometimes understand (and you, at your turn, motionless, you play in a different, bigger – because beyond you – board of time and space, different moves in front of other. You have done it before". The lyrical emblematic "character" of this *livresque*, theatrical and utopian space is Mopete, a product of a text that continuously articulates and creates itself, fictional projection of a lyrical self ironical and burlesque, indolent and allusive work of different discursive instances that criss-cross, interfere and coexist in Mircea Ivănescu's

poetry: “now mopete waters in his souls’ vase / a resentment for the dark-haired / rowena. And he stares at how, under the fake moon of melancholy / bitter flowers swing, the blue // sadness – I mean the ingenuous – sadness of dark-haired Rowena, he says to himself / was it, then, deceiving? / mopete is trying / torn apart; from rare shards / spread within his inner time to gather / meanings – and they unfurl through his fingers” (*mopete and resentments*). M. Ivănescu creates, in the space of his serious, ironic and at the same time burlesque poems, a universe of livresque reverie and of sweetened playfulness where, as Ion Pop notices “the poet hides under different masks (...) the author, the actor, the direction, in the neverending replayed show of *poesis*”. The poetic register is thus the playful one, in which great themes are rendered futile, and experiences are written with the fragile nib of scholastic aestheticism.

Like Bacovia, through the acute feeling of existential anxiety, through the persistent anguish of human solitude, “wandering inside moral and provincial labyrinths”, Mircea Ivănescu is, as Nicolae Manolescu noticed, “Barbian because of the profound Platonism of his visions, of an affinity both minutely depicted and deceiving”. His poetry, marked by transitivity in the sense of Gheorghe Crăciun’s concept, is one of atmosphere, with a vague theatrical touch, a falsely epic duality that maintains the illusion of verisimilitude of these “scenes” where the self is engaged into. Moreover, M. Ivănescu is the one that recants the Mallarmean postulates of lyrism, recovering the biographical and narrative line, bringing into poems of limited semantic proportions, the common language with its clichés and triviality. Noticing the last specificity of Ivănescu’s lyrism, Al. Cistelean finds that the poet “doesn’t flee from the tribal language and would not have written to anybody that he is descendant from the absolute. On the contrary, he descends from affinity and it is to this one that he wants to give consistency. On the one hand, by using the most improper language for poetic vocation, on the other hand by making the suggestive or imaginative performance irrelevant. Using the language specific to narrations, even if when writing the most elaborate sonnets (almost all of them with a surreptitious inaudible rhyme) he brings the language to a daily humility; rather in a denotative than connotative condition (but, in fact, using a sort of “deconotation”). His texts are dull in elocution and they also simulate the expressive monotony; the expressive events are rendered anonymous, flattened in the mass of the text, as if the latter should be one-dimensional”.

Illustrative in this respect is the poem *Indoor Scene* where the poet builds, from monotonous, dull images an environment made up of illusions, fictions and pieces of time: “mopete says – but what if we would now say / that from one day to another any moment / would turn into a scene unfolding in a slow continuity / of events – like in a novel where foggy characters are gathered / - men with sad eyes because of too much alcohol, women with their hair tightened in a black / shawl – and in the yellowish light, that reminds / you of the candle’s light would / start suddenly sophisticated discussions about life / and death and about soul and about I don’t know / what – and outside it would get dark”. The entire poem is nothing but a continuous search of self-identity in a monotonous rhythm and internalized glimpse cast upon himself. The human figures have turned into shadows, fragile silhouettes collapsed under the empire of time, lose their ontological consistency, and their apodictic presence, they turn into a mirage made up of interrogations and resignation: “and the shadows that have gathered of windows freeze / and, among them, when you raise / your eyes, to watch her face buried in the shawl – she’s not even here?”. Actually, *Indoor Scene*

brings to light the tendency to demystify the serious poetic themes, which are placed in a ludic register and treated with familiarity, with certain burlesque instinct, with ironic and self-ironic detachment. “The sophisticated discussions about life and death” are thus mocked at, placed in opposition with a certain loss of meaning of the being that transfers its ontological vigor to the so fragile space of the word. The figures’ silhouettes seem so devoid of weight, detached from the real frame, living in a sort of materiality, a reality made of words, of pieces of dialogues, of ill-assorted fragments of discourse. It seems that even reality loses referential attributes and the data are transferred, within the space of the poem, life in a mirror that deprives things of weight, mirroring only the spiritualized image, totally dematerialized. The poem *Indoor Scene* is written in a similarly epic register, with representation of some lyrical characters, of small events fugitively sketched, with reproduction of dialogues; all these ways of figuring the epic serve only to induce an idea that transcends them, to suggest a certain sacral substratum, hardly maintained by reserved gesticulation, by the anonymous drawing of the phase, substratum which is buried in the dense, thick slag of the profane.

M. Ivănescu is a poet that admits in every poem, in almost every line, his condition: that of prisoner of language, of creator living in the words’ captivity, perceiving, with consciousness both their ontic efemerity, their fragility and their existential deficit and the power to communicate some of the most diverse experiences, to build a fictional world, with diaphanous shapes, with imponderable relief and an immaterial essence. On the other hand, the poet also experiences the important degree of conventionalism sheltered by the word’s body, the figure of an improbable authenticity of the text being, thus, under the sign of skepticism. Ion Pop assumes that “The core of Mircea Ivănescu’s poetry resides exactly in this feature: all his poetry proposes itself as a game *sui generis*, and re-sketches at the same time the act of its construction, as imaginary real or imaginary acquiring the status of reality. It is a poem, that contains its own “reading”, involving the meditation over the expressive ability of the verb in connection with the authentic experience, and not in the least a questioning of the quality of the experience, as long as even the vital experience, the existential act cannot be transmitted but through words that hardly ever coincide with the inner mood of the subject”. *Mopete and hypostasis* is such a poem that reveals Mircea Ivănescu poetics and *poietics*. It is a text structured on the principle of self-referentiality, that is the reflection of the poem, exactly the poem that is about to be created, in the most relevant structures, in its integrating dynamics. The poet, prisoner of words, but also of a reality that he wants to fix inside the text, writes himself, locks his own fictional being inside the restricted frames of the poem: “mopete is writing a poem about mopete / sitting at the table in the pub, writing referring / to a poem about mopete – (mopete has on his table a complicated volume / with wonderful things about the Middle Ages – and ink stains because of the notes he has been making)” What is mopete’s condition, the one in the poem, creature of his own self, illusory vision which has a double identity, of creator and creature, of a self with a precise ontic status and fictional self, with a diminished existential importance? His striving for liberty and independence is quickly denied by his condition of livresque figure, a paper figure of illusory firmness: “mopete from the poem that he writes himself / has his own illusions about himself and / he thinks he is independent – but the owls- / symbols of wisdom – are watching him on his own forehead / because they know he is but a creation / that depends on any

unimportant absurdity / of mopete when he wants to frown / without reason, and they forget about it.” The end of the poem stages exactly the ambiguity of mopete’s condition, this bivalence of identity and existential order. His being is twice fictionalized: once by the author, by M. Ivănescu, and the second time by himself. It is a second degree self-mirroring, a revelation of the self-being in his fictional hypostasis, as an imaginary model that reflects, chimerically, the miracle of real existence: “mopete overturned / which one? – him – the other? the other?” A diffuse feeling of sadness emerges from this poem that configures the destiny of a paper figure, a figure that betrays its real inconsistency, the incapacity to live but through fictionalized illusory and irrelevant objects. The poet’s drama is that of lack of authenticity and instability in defining his own identity. Situated between his own text and his ego – difficult to be fixed in the poem’s mirror – the author watched by the “signs of reason” is always in danger of gliding from his condition of a being with a well – specified ontic status to the hallucinating frame, with deceiving marks of the poem. The closed space of the poem does not encourage expansions of enthusiasm towards the world, but on the contrary, the reality is forced to an existence through mandate, an inhibited, retractile existence.

Mircea Ivănescu’s poems stage, as it has been noticed, an “unreal real”, an imaginary world of the category of those sketched by the fictive, deceiving spaces of the mirrors. Mircea Ivănescu’s world seems an Eleatic one, frozen in its course, brought to a state of aggregation of lyricism that glorifies the usual, ordinary, common things. Actually, the same experiences, sentimental states, gestures and events creep through the body of the poem, in a universe where the ephemeral becomes eternity and the insignificant receives the brightness of exultant symbolism. Gheorghe Grigurcu considers that “it is specific to M. Ivănescu’s poetry the figure of the feeling that contemplates itself, through restless resumptions, additions and retouches. His entire production is merely a bitter reversal, in many ways, the same states, attitudes, backgrounds, as to indicate a resistance to dissolution, a stop at all costs. Death is not opposed to perfection, but to ordinary life, in its agglomeration of elements, while, at a superficial look, do not exceed the insignificant, fail to elude a minor status (hence some critics’ lack of trust in the aesthetic excellence of this creation, primitively mistaken with the quality of its “object”). A region where evanescence is blended with solidity, the vague with precision, estrangement with recovery, sufferance with jubilation”.

The wisdom of the Cat is part of the volume *Poems* appeared in 1970 and it is a representative poem for Mircea Ivănescu’s epic lyricism, or “antilyricism” (Gh Grigurcu). Structurally, the poem can be divided into three lyrical sequences. The first sequence of the poetic text is rather a meditation on the hypostases of a symbolic animal figure, with a literary and mythological tradition, that of the cat. Through the immobility and silence of its posture, the cat figure is associated with wisdom: “The Wisdom of the Cat - all agree / that the cat is a wise figure. And she herself / keeps this legend alive. (With much wisdom/ she creates her attitudes, and narrow-eyed, she watches people, flames, game / lights on glossy surfaces). But / - he once told me - cats are myopic. / Does it mean that wise eyes / are only a mask? That behind her yellow eyes / or green, cats cannot see faces / cannot see shades? (But maybe he is not right, / and cats see better than us, even during the day)”. The second sequence performs a translation of the poem, from animal symbolism to the figure of Socrates. Thus, it expands an epic description of the contrast between the biographical self and the deep one, between the philosopher’s trivial exterior appearance and conceptual depth,

interiority ecstasies: "Let's try otherwise. - Socrates was a wise, / had beveled nose and flowing matted beard as if algae on his chest - was ugly and looked / dirty, as they seem - and are - careless people / by clothing and visible conduct . / But if you revealed his face, removing the / ugly, you would discover a petty world of figurines, so precisely carved that / you would daze if you tried to look, and would lose / your thoughts. And he took one of these statues-/ in his hand, he showed it to you and you would see, listening to it, / for the first time new relations between the volumes and lines / and understandings, and refractions, and expectations ". The third sequence of the text brings a "moral", a conclusion, a closure of unfolding lyricism, this is the need of an inner look, and not necessarily of a quantitative one, to measure distances and silhouettes of things. The important thing is, the poet seems to tell us, not to consider the surfaces of the objects, their external appearance, which do not say anything definitive about their full and deep identity, but to measure the essences of the world, to circumscribe that space of light and ontic enlightenment that gives breadth and understanding to a form, a shape, a creature ("But Socrates himself was old. Maybe he - / as the cat - did not see very well - out. / Although – one may answer –he perceived / the movements of lights and shadows, and that / was enough for him. "). And in this poem, the echoes of intertextuality, and the conventions of a metapoetic construction clearly loom. Without rejecting the anecdote, on the contrary, building by minute and apparently trivial discretion scenes that seem cut from everyday life, the poet constructs in his fictions, a world of *livresque* in which ideas, concepts and cultural "experiences" flow naturally.

In the anonymous and insignificant universe configured by Mircea Ivanescu, *mopete* receives axiomatic value. A lyrical hero that lacks ontic consistency with a seemingly imperfect countenance, with unfinished gestures, *mopete* is a *livresque* figure par excellence, especially by his ironic attitude and allusive character, briefly sketched in a few elusive traits. Moreover, the poet places particular emphasis on surfaces, on the apparent aspect of things and beings, without having the intention to fix their essence, or to devote himself to the metaphysical fervor around them. This aspect is particularly noticed by George Perian "aiming to write outside of metaphysics, the author carefully avoids its terms, and even warns his readers that the world pictured in his lines is" without depth "and without" substance ", it is just a world of images. It seems that we live and move in an illusory world, that nobody and nothing has the consistency of reality and that eventually everything is a sham. What we got used to consider facts, for the poet are only "images, as in a book they read. "

The poetic effects arise in Mircea Ivanescu's lyrics, especially from the volatile evocation of the atmosphere, from the setting of poetic framework, a framework dominated by crepuscular images, dark rooms and squalid streets where these heroes wander , with small ontic dimensions and allegorical vague names. (v înnopteanu, bruna rowena, dr cabalu ,vasilescu's father's friend and i negoiescu etc.). Mircea Ivanescu's poems have the allure of some monologues of an exasperating monotony, where the same world without relief is evoked, in an atmosphere of meditation where the affects are suspended. It is as if, only an impersonal and neutral poetic instance would establish the same vision full of agony, structured by an ostentation of absence, of ontological emptiness. The poems from the *Mopeteiana* cycle are structured through the lyric effects of a permanent game between the disconcerting space of reality and that of fictional universe. There are frequent interferences and sliding between text and reality, between the actual and literal status of heroes, in a

halo of self-referentiality: "mopete is writing a poem about mopete / sitting at the table in the pub, writing referring / to a poem about mopete – (mopete has on his table a complicated volume / with wonderful things about the Middle Ages – and stains / ink stains because of the notes he has been making)/ mopete from the poem that he writes himself / has his own illusions about himself and / he thinks he is independent – but the owls- / symbols of wisdom – are watching him on his own forehead / because they know he is but a creation / that depends on any unimportant absurdity / of mopete's when he wants to frown / without reason, and they forget about it./ mopete overturned. / which one? He - other? other? "- *Mopete and hypostases*).

Mopete in the Inner World is a poem in which we can notice the temptation of self-reflexivity and neutral tonality, but equally the author's propensity for the lyric of atmosphere. The poetic frame is minutely drawn with a richness of detail, thus creating the illusion of a possible reality, a closed, claustrophobic one, with the attributes of an utopian and protector space: "one night, mopete was comfortably sat / by the fire, to read his paper - / behind him, the stairs leading to the attic /were crackling when the fire light plunged its egret / into a stair/ mopete was rustling when he was turning on the pages to follow what was written on one or another ". There is some complicity between the ordinary decor and the hero's gestures, the mechanical acts of the characters leading to the alienation of the existential fact. Feelings are, in other words, transferred to the space of automatism, the dynamics of life takes a rigid aspect and the uniqueness degrades to a mass product. In his poetry, Mircea Ivanescu does not create a proper inner space, but rather a space of interiority, given in fade lines, frames and colours in a neutral tonality and reserved timbre. The cultural tics of the hero, bring about the suggestion of the *livresque*, a parody *livresque*, but with ironic innuendos. "every now and then he would write down on his cuffs/ an idea that he could later rewrite / on the wall above the/ bed. Next to him, on the table, there were the bottle and glasses / (he had waited that night for his /best friend – but he did not come). The / whole scene was a beneficent peace / the level of the liquid in the bottle would lower with a reassuring palm ". The poet treats his characters, like a director, highlighting a diverse range of attitudes, from ironic complicity to expressive mimicry, to denunciation of automatism, of *livresque* tics or some caricatural deformations.

The projection of the existential fact into the area of the aesthetics, of artistic convention does not necessarily exclude the proximity of these lyrical visions to the territory of the dream. The hero's gestures, extremely slow, the contours devoid of determinations, so vague, all these infer propensity to dream register, to the fluctuating images of dreams, with their deceiving and unusual tectonics, with their strange geography. In fact, the hero's acts rather suggest the idea of a pantomime of a living being that lives through automatisms both in language and behavior, in a repetitive dynamics that translates nothing but a feeling of alienation fervently experienced by the lyrical being. Trying to define the author's lyrical territory of mopete, Ion Pop notes, *inter alia*, that "as a whole, Mircea Ivanescu's universe appears to be (taking into account the random motion of the imaginary) an essentially hypothetical world: each poem is but the diagram of this dynamics of approximating reality and with it, its own self substances. A world where the only freedom of the subject is to assume, to build in the limits/frame of the existential, figures and facets possibly correspondent, but whose validity can never be sure. His texts materialize, in fact, a strategy of getting closer to the

outer or the inner world, both blurred, inconsistent and menaced by death. " *Mopete in the the Inner World* is a symptomatic poem for how to write and feel Mircea Ivanescu's poetry. The lyrical vision designated here is one impregnated with livresque reflexes, with ironic and parody accents, tonality being in harmony with the atmosphere evoked: calm, neutral, briefly designated , in a few fugitive touches , no less suggestive. Transitive and minimalist, fascinated by the nuances of real and livresque iridescence, constructing, by dull scenes and figures, an authentic metaphysics of the ordinary, Mircea Ivanescu's poetry is especially defined as a perpetual game between the parallel mirrors of the text and the phenomenal existence, with fluctuating and inexpressive contours.

MIRCEA CĂRTĂRESCU. INSTANCES OF THE LYRIC IMAGINARY

Poet, writer, theoretician, Mircea Cărtărescu travels through literary domains at full sail, with an inborn talent, a prodigious memory and an enviable dexterity in handling the language. What we deal with here is a case of clear paradox: his literary nature, abundant and original meets, somewhere in the abyss of the human being or even at its rational surface, a fully assumed culture, assimilated with certain livresque devotion. The personal touch of the texts signed by Cărtărescu derives, generically speaking, from the collision between the feeling and the idea, thoughts and affects, from the coincidence of the contraries.

The shine off taking verve of the poet, his capacity and desire to counteract the pre-established models becomes very evident in *Poeme de amor* (1983) (*Love poems*). Performing a short review, we might say that, in time, the eros was conceived in a poetic grid, in two opposite instances. First of all would be the erotic poetry introduced by the troubadours, as instances of feeling limits, of representing the man in ceremonial postures of adoring and humiliation, of declaiming the affect in tonalities of exalted effusion. Much later, a certain reaction to this tradition imposed image appears, reaction that would lead to modern and postmodern poets go through a process of demitisation or re-writing the erotic feeling in the parody grid; this feeling is no longer evaluated in superlative-inflationist terms, but it is integrated into a new axiological code, feelings discovering a counterpart in the intellectual that sets the limits and makes them be rational, thus perceived in a reticent and circumspect manner by the (more) critic eye of the poet. Therefore, love is not transcribed in the solemn register but in the imaginative-ironic grid, evidently, with parody marks and humorous poetic phrase and slightly sharp and bitter lucidity. “iubito, sunt leșinat după sprayurile cu care te dai/ și mi se face sete de buzele tale.../ și aș vrea să mănânc puțin ruj de pe buza paharului tău.../ și să-ți deșurubez câteva lacrimi de sub ochiul tău.../ doar ca să-ți arăt cât pot fi de rău/ cât sunt de negru în cerul gurii”.

What we are dealing here with is, undoubtedly, a situation of de-mitisation of the feeling and the loved woman, in a language of clearly sought prosiness, where the word sounds brutally correct and the collocations derived from different semantic spheres make us think of Arghezi; this embodiment of the lively by means of a mechanic element leads to ironic and parody elements, as it appears in the following stanzas of an inexhaustible lexical power, amplified by the intertextual insertions, that aim to show that worldly life is nothing else than a comedy of the text: “arată-te. cumpără-mi. știu că ai bani./ că nu te-ai risipit *prin spini și bolovani*./ că ești lângă mine/ și mângâi ghemotocul dureros de zgârciuri, vene și intestine/ *tremur viața me*/ nu mai pot merge femeie braț cafea/ ridică-mă, spală-mă. *Cușitul os*./ am să fiu cuvios./ nu mai fac, nu mai pot să fiu așa de întreg./ *advocat, mare proprietar și aleg. Coleg*./ nu mai ține./ mi-e sete de tine, mi-e foame de tine/ îți văd tricoul (KISS ME) reflectat în vitrine/ ia-mă în brațe și strivește-mă bine”. Love, as expressed by the postmodern poet, is more like a comedy of the word than a pure feeling, a parody halo effect of the language than a psychologically traced affect. The same applies to the transplants of archaic terms or argot elements that help the language be charming and visually plastic. (“să ne iubim, chera mu să ne iubim per tujur/ ca mâine vom fi pradă inundațiilor, surpărilor de teren bețiilor crâncene/ ca mâine un ieri cu labe de păianjen de fân îți va umbla în cârlionții de florio ai coiffurii/ zăpăcindu-te, ambetându-te”).

In such a livresque featured poetry, the quotidian seems to be made of bibliographical references and the poet is articulated by reflections of the books read. It is true that there are biographical echoes, but these are also exposed in a bookish manner: (“o să suport condescendența tinerilor, o să las nasul în jos când o să vină vorba de poezie, o să fac traduceri/ ca să nu mă uite lumea, ca să par că mai trăiesc,/ sau o să-mi public cândva un volum de versuri din tinerețe/ atât de proaste, că nu le băgasem în nici o carte/ și o să am un succes «de prestigiu», mi se va spune «autorul *poemelor de amor*»,/ precursorul a Dumnezeu știe ce poezie va mai fi pe atunci”).

In *Levantul*, a ludic-parodic epic poem, the mannerism of Cărtărescu follows the line of abundance of heterogeneous objects. The most shocking image is that of a carnival marketplace, a textualised fair, dominated by bookish connotations. Cornel Regman observed the manner in which, starting with this volume, the poet shows more interest in ebullient phantasy, in extroversion: “In *Levantul*, Mircea Cărtărescu beats every record in conceiving an extravert poetry, that -just like the bee does with the honeycomb- also considers the honey to fill it. The epic poem with adventures and contingencies that appear as if pulled right out of the sleeve will constitute the frame for the unleashed phantasy of the poet. A phantasy that works on two levels, one of which strictly parody, a level that somehow activates the ingenuity of the hidden faber of the poet, with results not very high –we have to admit- (numerous imitations, attempts on given themes, even an ambitious gloss); the other level would be intrinsic to the condition of the poet, favouring the blooming of all the artistic gifts of the creator.”

The temptation of the game is very strong in the poem *Levantul*, an attempt towards the baroque exercise pushed to the absurd, by eliminating the extremely dispersed elements of the real, that, thus, make the passing to the world of imagery quite burlesque, fantastic, yet with echoes from Urmuz’s mecanomorph embodiment, as it appears in the following stanzas:

“Mestecări de roți dințate unse cu lichid dă frână/ Arce rupte, cruci de Malta prinse tare în șurube/ De cremaliere știrbe, de rulmenturi și de cupe.../ Una mare cât hambarul lua poame din cais/ Cu trei dește de aramă și le pune iute-n coșuri;/ Alta mică jumulește peanele de pe cocoșuri,/ Le ascute și le moaie-n călimări ce cresc din stâncă/ Și înscrie-n pergaminturi vro istorie adâncă;/ Alt mehanic cu lăboare de paing înșfacă iute/ Un pirat ce să holbase prea aproape de volute/ Și îl bagă-ntr-o chilie cu o poartă dă oțel:/ Într-o clipă-l scuiă proaspăt, pomădat, spălat și chel/ Ras obrazul, ras și capul, cum să poartă la tătari...”

The XIIth song from *Levantul* opens with a fastuous (in colour and tones) presentation of the Balkan area, where the magic of the past and temptation of the far-away is present, together with the feeling of indolence, obviously completed with a mix of suavity and horrible fear. This part of the poem imagines an entire world, a polychromatic, unarticulated and fascinating one, by its oniric projection and by the frame of perpetual oscillations between façade and essence, between reality and delusive illusion of the poetic game.

The archaic sounds and lexical forms abound, in the poet’s attempt to introduce the reader to the fabulous world of the Orient, a world with fluid contours and a trepidant mechanic of its own metabolism, with an inhomogeneous structure, with a polychromatic diversity extravagant in rhythm and form: „Floare-a lumilor, otravă ce distili între petale,/ Semilună care aur pui pă turle dă cristale,/ Vis al leneșei cadăne ce pe perini de atlaz/ Fundul greu strevede dulce pîn șalvarii de Șiraz,/ O, Levant, ostroave-n marea limpezită ca paharul,/ Sertăraș unde miroasă cimbrul și enibaharul/ Ce Dimov într-o poemă n-apucă a mai descri,/ Zeci de tronuri

hîde-n cari şade cîte-un Hangerlí,/ O, Levant, Levant feroce ca şi pruncul care bate/ Cuie într-o pisicuţă adormită – cine poate/ Neagra ta tristeţe-a trage-n al său pept şi a sta viu?/”.

Moreover, the XIIth song establishes an eloquent opposition between the present and the future, between the concrete world and the phantasy world, a phantasy that makes the profiles of the objects seem relative, alter them by transforming them into magic weightlessness. The author is being presented here while writing his epic poem, being visited by his own characters. The station in the present is performed in a cold and freezing atmosphere, a state improper to inspiration: „Lucrez în bucătărie. Suflu-n degetele reci./ Gaze sînt mai mici ca unghia, ca petale de-albăstrea./ Zaţ de nechezol mînjeşte fundul ceştii de cafea./ Sunt pe masă doar borcane nespălate, şi-un cuţit:/ Se reflectă-n lama-i oablă chipul meu nebărbierit”.

We find here something from the typical postmodernist taste for the past, both historical and literary past, some sort of “retro” fashion that recovers, in a unique ludic and parodic manner, elements and more or less obsolete parts of the literary mechanism. Mircea Cărtărescu dismantles old literary resorts in a very virtuous and frenetic manner. The real world and its fictional paraphrasing are mingled here, under a multitude of carnival or ludic instances and accents. According to N. Manolescu, the “comedy” of the literature is assumed by means of certain language game approaches that confer archaic charm or scent, or, on the contrary, imprint a neologistic hue to the invented language. An extremely lively linguistic performance is being achieved by the mingling and mutual contamination of words belonging to different lexical areas: „Cînd pornii poema asta cît eram de cilibiu!/ Joacă îmi părea a face să trăiască-n epopee/ Şpangă de bărbat alături de pept fraged de femee,/ Stiluri mult sofisticate să aduc dintr-un condei/ Cum călugărul înfloare pergamintul dă minei/ Ticluiam, cu muzichie dă clavir şi dă spinetă,/ Vreo istorie pe apă, vreun soi de operetă,/ Plictisit fiind de joasa poezie-a vremii noastre.../ Cum suceşte cofetarul acadele roz, albastre/ Împleteam şi eu la frase, umilitul condeier/ Rîdicînd nu turnul Babel, ci doar tortul lui Flaubert./ Cine-ar fi crezut vreodată că o lume-avea să iasă/ Vînturînd aripe ude, din gogoşa de mătasă/ A Visării, Poesiei... Doamne, Doamne,-ţi mulţumesc!/ Folosişi iar carnea-mi slabă la ceva nepămîntesc,/ Străvăzuşi iar lumi frenetici pînă mocrila mea dă sînge,/ Din nou bila cea vrăjită-n palma mîinii mele sîngi e!”.

The epic poem *Levantul* stands a very complicated plot and a very juicy language and can also be perceived as a text with multiple metatextual valences since the poet rewrites the lines of force of the Romanian poetry from a ludic-ironic and parodic perspective. The stylistically dexterity of the author is amazing, just as the fully management of certain diverse language registers. The image of the author facing the fictional world imagined by himself, the livresque, the permanent game among text, intertext and metatext make the poem *Levantul* be a poem in which comic and parody, imitation and irony meet in order to configure a comedy of literature rewritten in the postmodern template.

The poem *Georgica a IV-a*, from the volume *Faruri, vitrine, fotografii* (*Lights, shopwindows, photos*) belongs to the typical postmodern creations, that attempts to parodically recreate myths and cultural or literary forms. The parody aims at the purism of the literary genres and species, whose structure is undermined by bookish quotations, by analysis of intertextual allusion or by appeal to brutally actual images. This cycle of poems authored by Mircea Cărtărescu is, according to Radu G. Țeposu “a replica to the bucolic and arcadian poetry, moreover, to the homogeneity of the imaginary classic, to the poetics of harmony.”

In other words, the parodic instinct of the poet is oriented towards the certain tectonic of the imaginary classic, towards the monolithic stability of the images, towards the conventionalism

of certain procedures and the subversive approach of a poetic manner intensely particular. Heterogeneity and reflexive irony is preferred to clarity and harmony, thus, the image of the reality becomes relative, of inedite dimensions, closer to the complex phenomenology of the real. Again, we find in *Georgica a IV-a*, the same mannerist distortion of reality, treating the world in a parodic tone, with traditional hues and real imposed pieces, but also irony. „țăranul de când cu electrificarea/ înțelege cum stau lucrurile pe planetă/ se indignază în mijlocul pogoanelor sale/ de situația din cipru și liban/ pândește sateliții și le smulge/ aparatura electronică bă/ plozilor nu uitați bateriile solare/ să ne-ncălzim la chindie conserva de fasole/ cu cârnăciori produși la fetești/ bă dați în câini lumea e mică/ bă cu gerovital se duc ridurile ca-n palmă (...)”.

The poet aims to un-sanctify the poetic language and the world it evokes. If in the poetry from the past the rural world and the peasant, as signifying traditional figures, were presented in a cvasiritualic, mythical frame, the poetry written by Mircea Cărtărescu dissolves that festive air by means of irony, parody and imitation. The attempt to turn against the solemn valence of ones poetic universe is achieved by the insertion of a denotative, strictly actual language, using terms taken from daily life and common lyrical “objects”. The orality of this poem is quite obvious: the appellations (hai, bă, dragii mei etc.) suggest an imagined dialogue that imprints dynamism and fluency to the poetic expression.

There is a mutation in tone and perception in the second part of the poem. The frivolous tone, marked by parodic and ironic hues, turns to a grave one, touched by an acute perception of the world, life and death. The intertextual stress is also present here since the echoes of the poetry written by Arghezi (from *De-a v-ați ascuns*) are clearly sensed. The poetic language is austere, adornment-free, the line cut is severe and neat, the text tone is mainly grave even liturgical in phrase. The paraphrase inspired from the poetry authored by Arghezi, together with the solemn touch in which the game of life and death is played, do not lack the irony, or the parodic hue. „hai dați-i zor cu porumbul că eu mă duc/ puțin pe lumea cealaltă adică a treia/ și ultima feții mei/ dragii mei copchiii mei ce să-i faci/ așa e jocul/ arză-l-ar focul”. This poetry stands the mix of old and new, of simple and complex universe, of solemn and parodic spirit.

Having a heterogeneous composition and an extremely diverse vocabulary, oscillating between grave and jolly aspects of life, *Georgica a IV-a* is a poem that contains an un-sanctifying meaning, a polemic predisposition regarding the idyllic and mythic perception of the rural world, of the peasant and his environment. The poetic discourse is of an extreme semantic clarity, the image conformation is precise, the tectonic of the text is founded on an extremely eloquent game between gravity and impulse, between solemn and ludic applied upon verb exploitation.

Referring to the type of articulating the imagery in the poetry of Cărtărescu, Radu G. Țeposu observes: “the eye of the author is avid, febrile, sees a lot and gathers the infinity of the perceived fragments that move enigmatically, hyperbolically or microscopically as if in a plasma. The impression of ontological mess, of fastuous congestion suggests a type of imagination: the poet is fancies in representation out of a desire to be realist in observation. The precision, the hyperrealist accuracy apparently positivist in description push the details to uncertainty, to convulsive explosion. The final image is of a raving perception, of a *misterium tremens*. The observation and description intentionally unselected are forms that aim to recover homogeneity by plurality, by fabulous agglutination. The vision is the style.”

Ciocnirea (The Collision) is a love poem, in which Mircea Cărtărescu finds himself again against the wool of the romantic mentality and tonality. Love loses the solemn feature and gravity, the hieratic grace of the feeling becomes lucid, extrovertit emotion, but also phantasy

display of informal gestures, suggestions of the ineffable and details of the most prosaic reality. The initial sequence of the poem describes a communication crisis, if not a communion one, of two human beings that live in a technical universe, with crumbled articulations and with a predisposition to materialise. „într-un târziu am încercat să-ți dau telefon, dar telefonul murise/ receptorul duhnea a formol, am deșurubat capacul microfonului/ și am găsit fierul ruginit, plin de viermi;/ am căutat șurubelnița/ și-am desfăcut carcasa: de lița bobinelor/ își prinseseră păianjenii pînza./ pe șnurul împletit, acum putred, cu cauciucul mîncat și sîrma zdrelită/ își lăsau mirosul furnicile”.

The second sequence of the poem brings along a modification in tone, in lyrical disposition and in image register. The poet shifts from a space of the concrete, of the appearances, of the intolerable details to the surreal regime, in which lines of the objects are spoiled, forms and surfaces are mingled until annulled, distances and differences abolished. In fact, the poet is building in a surrealist-ironic manner and using disparate elements of the real, unified and activated by the eros, an oneiric fairy, in which objects lose their weight and consistency and the intolerable constraint of the space and time seize to function. A universe created in the surrealist dreams is being affected by the grading and degrading eros. „l-am apucat, l-am smucit pîn-a ieșit din pioaneze/ cu tencuială cu tot,/ am tras de el pînă am început să apropiu/ metru cu metru cartierul tău de al meu/ turtind farmaciile, cofetăriile, pleznind țevile de canalizare/ încălecind asfalturile, presînd atît de mult stelele pe cerul violaceu,/ de amurg, dintre case/ încît deasupra a rămas doar o muchie de lumină scînteietoare/ pulsînd în aerul ars, ca de fulger./ trăgeam de fir, și ca un sfînt indian făcînd trapezul pe ape/ statuia lui c. a. rosetti aluneca spre miliție/ consiliul popular al sectorului doi/ se ciocni de foișorul de foc și se duse la fund cu tot cu o nuntă/ iar strada latină zîmbi; trăgeam de fir, încolăcindu-l pe braț, și deodată/ casa ta cu brîuri albe și roz ca o prăjitură de var/ apăru cu fereastra ta în dreptul ferestrei mele/ geamurile plezniră cu zgomot/ iar noi ne-am trezit față-n față/ și ne-am apropiat din ce în ce mai mult/ pînă ne-am îmbrățișat strivindu-ne buzele/ pulverizîndu-ne hainele, pieile, amestecîndu-ne inima/ mîncîndu-ne genele, smalțul ochilor, coastele, sîngele,/ ciobindu-ne șira spinării, arzînd”.

The third lyrical sequence brings into the foreground, after the impetuous leap in the imaginary and miraculous oneiric domain, the throwback in the common reality, just like the place of the dynamic, ardent images is taken by the static, dull, still images. The erotic ecstasy is followed by a feeling of unbeing, by a symbolic leap out of time. „arzînd cu troznete, ca dați cu benzină/ arzînd cu ghețuri albastre, cu stalactite de fum/ cu ceară sfîrșitoare, cu seu orbitor/ pînă cenușa a umplut lada de studio și chiuveta din baie/ și păianjenii și-au făcut plase în coșul pieptului nostru”. A poem of the opposites (real/unreal, mundane/sublime, suave/atrocious, dynamic/static), *Ciocnirea (The Collision)* is a poem of erotic crisis, a special state built out of ups and downs, of burns and ashes, contingency and transcendence, surrealist-oniric vision and brutal observation of the mundane reality.

Gheorghe Grigurcu made an efficient synthesis of the most important data of the poetry signed by Cărtărescu, underlining the elements of rebelliousness and nihilism, that are to be found in the poetic structure: “being anti-discursive by means of interminable discourse, being anti-sentimental by means of exhibition, being anti-calophile by means of amazing writing subtleties, he constructs his performance upon a rigorous freedom. His nihilism is a sparkling display, directed with accuracy, his rebelliousness stands an intellectual alibi, and the expressive subversion he seems to promote is the result of a language cult. It is precisely that surprisingly

mature ability to master the levers of poetry the one that allows him the synthetic effects, especially that immense, water-fally text, figure of a frenetic saying.”

The poem *O motocicletă parcată sub stele* (*A motorcycle parked under the stars*) is structured like a long monologue, written in an ironic and parodic style. The décor of the poem is ambivalent, having elements of the mundane space, with shops, gangs and streets and also with a very live suggestion of the cosmic elements (stars, galaxies etc.) In fact, one can say that the mirror of the motorcycle plays, among other things, a mediating role, a passing function from one space to the other, from the terrestrial dimension to the cosmic one: „sunt o motocicletă parcată sub stele, lângă vitrina magazinului/ de reparat televizoare,/ din gang vine curent, sunt palidă, slăbită,/ în magazin au lăsat un bec aprins, așa că vreo două tuburi catodice/ ghivece cu asparagus și cactuși, rafturi de cornier înșesate de carcase/ de televizor, casete AGFA și cabluri/ luminează tulbure, îmi populează singurătatea./ căci mă simt singură./ în oglinda mea retrovizoare foiesc galaxiile,/ aburesc stelele în roiuri globulare, își trimit găfăitul radiosursele/ toate îndepărtându-se-n fugă, ca niște criminali de la locul faptei/ lăsând o dâră de sânge în urmă”.

Besides the theatrical-allegoric air of the poem, we can also feel an antinomy between animated/unanimated, between real/unreal, with the irrepressible presence of a feeling of nostalgia of the steel and rubber being towards the soul states of the human („ce liniște câteodată mă-ntreb/ ce-o însemna să faci dragoste, căci ei vorbesc doar de asta. în fiecare/ sâmbătă ei mă încăleacă/ și mă târăsc pe șosele. văd dealurile, norii, soarele/ picăturile de ploaie, copacii încurcându-se-n curcubeu.../ ah, cilindrii mei îmi ticăie nebunește, atunci chiar simt că trăiesc./ ei intră în motel și fac dragoste./ ei sunt Stăpânii și se simt liberi./dar cum poate fi cineva liber când e făcut din celule?”). The entire poem preserves the irreconcilable opposition between the object transfixed in its space and the human being, a being able to express and achieve its own options. The interrogation at the end of the first lyrical sequence of the poem is exciting as it expresses the idea of human perishness, of fragility of the human flesh as opposed to the unanimated inert more durable mater.

If we were to consider the human being from the point of view of the way it is built, the human being is in a disadvantage, but if we were to approach the feeling of love, the human is privileged, love is an affective state that confers him a special statute, an ideal physiognomy, that generates harmony and affective equilibrium. The aspiration to love felt by the motorcycle is actually equated to a tension towards the higher levels of the feeling, the human sphere with its proteic universe of feelings, restlessness, repressions „Și înapoi în gang, lângă vreo dacie prăfuită./ mi-e sete de dragoste, dacă aș putea iubi măcar vreun stecker cu/ prelungitor din vitrina asta./ mi-aș luneca degetele pe pielea lui de plastic alb, dac-ar vrea/ și dac-aș avea degete, dac-aș putea să trăiesc/ măcar și în câmpul bioelectric al cactusului...”

The last part of the poem gets a deceptive tone, it is marked by a state of unfulfilness, by a revelation of pain and death „curând, curând o să mor și n-am făcut nimic în lumea asta,/ or să mă arunce la fiare vechi/ or să îmi crape farul și becul ars o să-mi atârne de două firisoare/ de liță/ toată viața i-am ajutat pe alții să facă dragoste/ iar eu o să mor printre bobine, magneti și ciulini./ sunt o motocicletă parcată sub stele./ dimineața or să mă-ncalece iar, or să-mi sucească ghidonul,/ or să mă ambreieze/ și iar pe asfaltul multicolor, printre dealurile roșcovane,/ printre munții albaștri/ prin depresiuni străbătute de râuri/ printre pasajele de cale ferată, prin orașe de provincie cristaline/ rulând contra vântului prin stropii de ploaie și gazul de eșapament/ mâncând kilometrii./ asta o însemna să faci dragoste?/ oricum, asta e consolarea mea, e meseria mea, e dragostea mea./ pentru asta merită să fii singur.” Being an allegory of the irreconcilable tension

between animated and unanimated, between human and the object, the poem *O motocicletă parcată sub stele* (*A motorcycle parked under the stars*) stands as a clear proof of the postmodern lyrical means that Mircea Cărtărescu is able to master: phantasy, irony, parody, rapid alternation of poetic spaces and scriptic predispositions, ludic spirit and oniric register.

Poema chiuvetei (*The poem of the sink*) appeared in the poet's maturity volume *Totul* (1985), (*Everything*). The *Idile* (*Romance*) consists of love poems, in which the poet performs an ironic-ludic marked eulogy of the loved one. The romantic magniloquence is relative here due to the parodic hue, the ardour of the feeling is tempered due to the restrictive impulse of the daily logic of the imaginary. Nicolae Manolescu observes: "Just like in the *Poemele de amor* (*Love poems*), the poems of the *Idile* (*Romance*) volume is based on a superior game not only because of the feelings, but also because of the literary forms in which they were expressed. By mixing the erotic styles, Mircea Cărtărescu renews the extravagant poetry written by Minulescu: emotional glibness, exotic toner, references to the immediate reality of a certain environment, deliberate incongruence, intended exhibitions, onomastic delirium. The poet uses the most various registers to sing his love into: serious, comic, hit, Bucharest slang, professional style etc."

The symbolic and allegoric drama from the poem *Luceafărul*, (*The Evening Star*) written by Eminescu is also debated here in verses and images that are un-sanctifying, in ludic and phantastic tones, in a vivid and polychromatic language that denotes common objects, with a completely erased existential accent. The lyrical heroes are treated as objects with the un-sanctifying impulse, parodic and linguistic hoax approached by the poet – all these are elements of the postmodern discourse valued by Mircea Cărtărescu out of his desire to actualise a myth, to revive it by un-sanctifying the vision by immediate connection to the harmless mundane element.

The lyrical "objects" do not belong anymore to the circle of the romantic absolute. On the contrary, they are extracted from the domestic universe. The distance between the protagonists of the lyrical script (*the yellow star* and *the sink*) is immeasurable since the two entities belong to irreconcilable ontic spheres. "Într-o zi chiuveta căzu în dragoste/ iubi o mică stea galbenă din colțul geamului de la bucătărie/ se confesă mușamalei și borcanului de muștar/ se plînsă tacîmurilor ude./ în altă zi chiuveta își mărturisi dragostea:/ – stea mică, nu scînteia peste fabrica de pâine și moara dîmbovița/ dă-te jos, căci ele nu au nevoie de tine/ ele au la subsol centrale electrice și sînt pline de becuri/ te risipești punîndu-ți auriul pe acoperișuri/ și paratrăznete". The poem continues to insert parodic invocations by means of which the star is invited to master "the linoleum kingdom" and become "queen of the cockroaches". The inflexions of faked fairy and the oniric reflexes confer the poem a vague surrealist colour, with indefinite form of the elements, with a broken, lent syntax of the images: „stea mică, nichelul meu te dorește, sifonul a bolborosit/ tot felul de cîntece pentru tine, cum se pricepe și el/ vasele cu resturi de conservă de pește/ te-au și îndrăgit./ vino, și ai să scînteiezi toată noaptea deasupra regatului de linoleum/ crăiasă a gîndacilor de bucătărie". The tragicomic drama is a drama of incompatibilities and of communication.

The erotic language is thus un-sanctified, deprived of the hues of the sublime and rethory invested with by the romantic poets and the elements used are, as already presented, sent to the common space of the kitchen. „dar, vai! steaua galbenă nu a răspuns acestei chemări/ căci ea iubea o strecurătoare de supă/ din casa unui contabil din pomerania/ și noapte de noapte se chinuia sorbind-o din ochi./ așa că într-un tîrziu chiuveta începu să-și pună întrebări cu privire/ la sensul existenței și la obiectivitatea ei/ și într-un foarte tîrziu îi făcu o propunere mușamalei".

The ending of the poem brings into the foreground the minstrel of this fabulous postmodern fable, in which the heroes signal to the space of the kitchen and the predisposition towards fake and comedy of the language is dominant: ”.. cîndva în jocul dragostei m-am implicat și eu/ eu, gaura din perdea, care v-am spus această poveste./ am iubit o superbă dacie crem pe care nu am văzut-o decît odată.../ dar, ce să mai vorbim, acum am copii preșcolari/ și tot ce a fost mi se pare un vis”. The love story between the little star and the kitchen sink has as presumed, an ironic and parodic ending, in which the flee in the unreal, in the phantasy world is refused and fulfilment in the terrestrial, common space is the only one possible. Formally speaking, the poet explores here the resources of invocation and exclamation, appeals to the monologue and dialogue, abrupt images and surrealist suggestions of the nitric, but also performs a rough cutting, a firm and concise observation of the common reality. This “reversed Evening star” oscillates between the fairy love dream and earthly attraction under the ironic and parodic touch of the postmodernists.

O seară la operă (A night at the opera) is, probably the most read poem written by Cărtărescu, besides the *Levantul*. The *Argument*, quotes a probabilistic speculation according to which “a monkey trained to type and having the infinity of time at its disposal, will eventually succeed, in some billion years, to reproduce a sonnet written by Shakespeare. The poem refers to the moment in which our monkey gathers all its efforts and manages to, more or less well, perform this sonnet.”

The poem is, as noticed, an intertextual journey among the phases of the Romanian love poems. The poet uses several types of attitudes and of stylistic registers of the imaginary in order to achieve the performance of the enloved gestures: intertextual quotes, parody and imitation, irony touch, image collage,

On the other hand, the poem *O seară la operă (A night at the opera)* is also a comedy of the erotic language, a text built from other texts, at the junction of other texts, fed by other texts, fuelling the visionary energies with the rhetoric of the erotic language. N. Manolescu justly underlined such a pose of the text signed by Mircea Cărtărescu: “One prime idea to be depicted from here is that the poem is built by words and they somehow lay at the poet’s disposal, since he does not invent but use them. Any love poem is, in the same time, new, original, resulted from the recombination of all the existent love poems. *O seară la operă (A night at the opera)* is a splendid programmatic poem serving this theme. There is no such thing as a ground zero of the poetic language. Moreover, poems reflect a literary tradition than they express feelings. On the edge, a love poem could be the synthesis of a certain erotic line, as a text born out of other texts, in peaceful coexistence. A synthesis animated by parody, no less authentic than the versing of the poet’s love feelings.”

The first part of the poem ironically transcripts a juvenile erotic discourse, in an enflamed and sparkling Labis style: “Sînt iar îndrăgostit. e-un curcubeu/ deasupra chioșcului de ziare, stației de taxi, farmaciei și WC-ului/ public din piața galați/ reproduș pe retină de copii fărimați/ reflectat de șinele verzi de tramvai/ străbătute de sentimente electrice, emoții cu aburi și senzații cu cai/ e-un curcubeu/ pe fiecare patiserie-ntomnată și chiar pe bombeul pantofului meu/ și fiecare stradă pare neobrăzat de adevărată./ – dar iat-o că se arată:/ dinspre eminescu, întunecînd chioșcul de dulciuri și vulcanizarea/ cu zgomotul pe care-l face marea/ cu țipătul sfișietor de jupoane, tacheți, cucoane și tîrgoveți,/ furouri, nervuri, sinucigași, stații peco/ stilouri kaveko”.

In the second part of the poem we discover a different register of the lover, a prosaic one, of the mundane verb, with juicy, picturesque accents, in short dialogues and abrupt wording:

“bestia dracului se învățase să sugă la cuba libre/ din același pahar cu mine. îl mai pocneam câteodată/ dar e drept că în general îi toleram multe./ – bătrîne, dă-mi voie măcar pînă la toaletă./ sau dă-mi o țigară, știi, munca, și mai ales creația are nevoie,/ nu-i așa, de un stimulent, de pildă Rafa.../ (i-am dat un omei)/ – păi vezi?/ și iar dă-i cu țacănitul ăla dement/ – încă puțin, bătrîne, și iese o odă cum n-a văzut kansasul, fii/ atent ce poantă:/ în fine, tipul și tipa/ sînt în piața victoriei, lângă muzeul antipa/ și tocmai cînd totul merge țaș, merge brici/ vine existența și le spune: hai, dați-i cu sasu’ de-aici!/ – hai, gata, fetița, gata. o să treacă, toate trec în lumea asta./ – dar mai există existența? mai răsar stelele? mai există orașe?/ – nu știu, nu fac politică./ – păi atunci hai să ieșim dintre betoanele astea/ și, la braț cu mama Natură/ cu pletele-n vînt să ne avîntăm printre dealurile înverzite/ printre herghelii, sau pe malul mării/ să respirăm briza sărată a strîmtorilor/ și să plîngem de-atîta extaz pe carapacea crabilor/ în spumă, în algele băloase, să ne tăiem în scoici/ și pescărușii să ne ciugulească de degete.../ închipuie-ți, bătrîne, e primăvară!”.

The key characters of the poem are The Poet and Monkeyboy, an alter-ego. The Poet unreels his real “biography”, with sadness and failure, melancholy and memories, while the Monkeyboy is represented in the other instance, a fictional one; his feelings are created by other texts, his ontic statute is, in fact, artistically moulded in livresque and intertextual resonance. In the dialogue between the Monkeyboy and the Woman, we find an abstract version of the illustrated history of the Romanian love poetry, in an alternation of styles and tonalities that remind us of Văcărescu, Alecsandri, Eminescu, Blaga, Barbu, Arghezi. By this parodic and imitation procedure the poet recovers, in fact, explores expressiveness and tonalities characteristic to the Romanian lyrical language. The ending of the poem is programmatic. There is this eulogy to creation and to the creator of permanent artistic values. Pentru artist, femeia nu-i femeie/ ci mai curînd ea seamănă-a bărbat/ căci harul lui abia atunci scînteie/ cînd de-un surîs se lasă fecundat./ Abia atunci gîndirea sa adîncă/ rămîne grea, și plină e de rod/ cînd luntrea i se sparge ca de-o stîncă/ în țandări, de al rochiei izvod./ Artistul e-a domniței lui mireasă/ și-n grele chinuri naște mintea sa;/ deși din carnea lui a fost să iasă,/ poemul e asemeni și cu ea./ pătrunde, deci, din nou în al meu gînd,/ să-ți nasc copii, ce n-or muri curînd”. Intertextuality but the so-called un-poetic inflexions the infusions of the existential ugliness and hieratic grace of the love feeling, triviality and suavity mingle in the poem *O seară la operă* (*A night at the opera*), programmatic poem and, in the same time, significant for the artistic technique and the vision of Mircea Cărtărescu.

Extremely imaginative and ironic, mannerist and using a baroque style, Mircea Cărtărescu touches several and very different poetry ages, nevertheless remaining himself, in a speculative intercession. In the light of the text, the eye of the theoretician hungry for paradoxes is always present like in a suave-allegoric palimpsest.

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